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ETHICAL
INTERNALISM AND EXTERNALISM

by

Sharon E. Sytsma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty

of the Graduate School of

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May

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c. 1990, Sharon E. Sytsma

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VITA

The author, Sharon Elizabeth Sytsma, is a full-time instructor at Northern Illinois University, in DeKalb, and a Crown Humanities Fellow at Loyola University in Chicago. She was awarded the Crown Humanities Fellowship in 1986 upon admission to the Graduate Program in Philosophy.

Mrs. Sytsma received her B.A. from Northern Illinois University in January, 1973, majoring in Philosophy. She received 12 hours of graduate credit in Philosophy from Tulane University in New Orleans in the Spring Semester of 1974, and completed her Master's Degree in Philosophy at Northern in January, 1979.

She was a Graduate Assistant at Northern between 1978 and 1979, and a Faculty Assistant there in the Fall Semesters of 1981 and 1982. She has been teaching philosophy at various institutions since 1981. These include: Elgin Community College (1981), Kishwaukee Community College (1982), W. R. Harper College (1982-1983), St. Francis College (1984), and Rockford College (part-time between Fall of 1982 and Fall of 1985, and full-time in the Spring of 1986). She has been an instructor at Northern Illinois University since 1983, and has been teaching there full-time since 1988.

Other professional experience includes initiating a Philosophy program at Kishwaukee College (1982); coordinating a panel discussion on moral issues relating to Nuclear War at Rockford College (1986); being a panel member discussing the problem of abortion at the Newman Center in DeKalb (1981, 1989); and presenting a paper at a conference on Health Care in an Aging Society, in Little Rock, Arkansas (1989). Her article, "Age-Rationing of Medical Resources" appeared in the June, 1990 issue of The World and I. Mrs. Sytsma is a member of the American Philosophical Association and of the Society for Health and Human Values.

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INTRODUCTION

It is common, or even fashionable, in contemporary discussions of ethics, to refer to ethical theories as being examples of "internalism" or of "externalism." Internalism and externalism refer to differing theories of moral motivation. The issue represents the struggle to clarify the relationship between judgments about moral obligation and moral motivation. Attempts are made to defend one theory of moral motivation over another, or to correctly label traditional major ethical theories as internalist or externalist. The distinction is supposed to provide a template by which ethical theories can be classified. And each side of the distinction purports to reflect the truth concerning the relation between moral obligation and moral motivation.

An oddity becomes apparent, however, even on the most cursory reading of the literature relating to the issue. There seems to be little agreement when it comes to the classification of theories as examples of internalism or externalism. To cite a few glaring illustrations: William

Frankena labels Kant as an externalist, while Thomas Nagel and Christine Korsgaard consider Kant to be a "paradigmatic" internalist.[1] Nagel labels Hume an internalist, though of an anti-rationalist sort, while Korsgaard's argument seems to imply that Hume is an externalist.[2] Charlotte Brown suggests that Hume's moral epistemology commits him to internalism, but when Hume turns to the problem of moral motivation he gives an externalist account, so that it is problematic to classify him as one or the other.[3] Frankena suggests that at least one aspect of the debate between Plato and Aristotle is that Plato is an internalist and Aristotle is an externalist, while Korsgaard and Nagel align Aristotle with Kant on the side of internalism.[4] Frankena claims that intuitionism is a "striking example" of externalism, while Korsgaard describes intuitionists as "minimal"

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[1]William Frankena, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy," in A. I Meldon's Essays in Moral Philosophy (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958), 44; Thomas Nagel, The Possibility of Altruism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 11-12; and Christine Korsgaard, "Skepticism about Practical Reason," The Journal of Philosophy 83 No. 1, (January 1986): 10.

[2]See Nagel, 10. Korsgaard's interpretation of Hume as an externalist will be explained in Chapter Three.

[3]Charlotte Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?" Journal of the History of Philosophy 26 (January 1988): 69-87.

[4]See Frankena, 41; Korsgaard, 18; Nagel, 11.

externalists, "just falling short" of being internalists.[5] Nagel and Korsgaard refer to Mill's ethical philosophy as a prime example of externalism, and John Robertson classifies him as an internalist.[6]

These examples of disagreement are astonishing. Surely the disagreement is significant. It could indicate either a lack of consensus concerning the nature or criterion of internalism and the nature or criterion of externalism. Or it could indicate a fundamental ambiguity or fuzziness about all these notions which makes them subject to such a variety of interpretations and applications. One could obviously conclude that the distinction between internalism and externalism is simply unhelpful as a way of understanding the differences between moral theories in regard to the problem of moral motivation or anything else. On this response, the distinction ought to be simply disregarded. But there is another response which proposes that the various ways in which the distinction has been drawn need to be formulated with greater precision. The goal, obviously, will be to make the distinction in a way which avoids ambiguity. When the categories are clearly distinguished, consensus of

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[5]Frankena, 43; Korsgaard, 10.

[6]Nagel, 8 - 9; Korsgaard, 9; John Robertson, "Internalism about Moral Reason" Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 67 (1986): 124.

classification should be facilitated and the real usefulness of the internalist/externalist distinction can be tested.

I will argue that most of the dispute about these categories is a result of the lack of conceptual clarity in the characterization of internalism and externalism. I will also show that a careful review of the various authors' formulations of the distinction will reveal that terms have been shared by individuals, but with each using them in slightly, or perhaps even significantly, different ways from the others. Further, I will argue that one way of formulating of the internalist/externalist distinction will prove more helpful or of greater philosophical interest than others. In this version of the distinction, internalism refers to the view that reason has a motivational influence in morality. I will refer to this version of internalism as Rational Internalism, following a lead by Nagel. Thus, the contemporary philosophical distinction between internalism and externalism reawakens one of the central, and most exciting debates in the history of ethical philosophy.

These suspicions yield a program for this dissertation. The first part of the dissertation will focus on a critical examination of the distinction between internalism and externalism in contemporary moral philosophy. I will begin by showing that the distinction

between internalism and externalism has not been adequately and consistently drawn. In fact, I will identify four different ways the distinction has been articulated. I will then examine the various versions of the distinction in an effort to pinpoint, and then to rectify, the ambiguity or other sources of confusion.

Since Thomas Nagel has popularized the distinction in this decade, I will start, in Chapter I, with his characterizations and then trace the distinction back to Falk and Frankena, since Nagel attributes the origin of the distinction to them. We will see that even though Falk is identified as the originator of the internalist\externalist distinction; he does not use the terms to refer to theories of moral motivation at all. And we will see that Frankena's use of the terms, though clearly referring to theories of moral motivation, is significantly different from Nagel's. In the second chapter more contemporary versions of this distinction will be studied in order to see if it is further refined, altered, or simply adopted in a confused and inarticulate manner. Indeed, we will find little uniformity in the way the distinction is made.

In the third chapter I will summarize and clearly formulate the various definitions of internalism and externalism and compare their respective merits or inadequacies. The focus will be on precision, helpfulness, and philosophical interest. I will argue that the version

of internalism which is of greatest philosophical interest is the version referred to by Nagel and Korsgaard as Rational Internalism.

My aspirations, however, go beyond a mere critical appraisal of the work done on internalism and externalism so far, and also beyond the attempt at conceptual clarification. In the second part of the dissertation, I hope to provide a defense of internalism, specifically, of "Rational Internalism," the view that reason has a motivational influence in morality. As the first step of this project, in chapter four, I will identify four objections that have been raised against internalism generally and one objection which has been raised against Rational Internalism specifically, and provide counterarguments which show that these objections (although problematic for other inferior versions of internalism) pose no adequate or conclusive difficulties for Rational Internalism. The objections that have been raised against internalism generally are the following: 1) Internalism is obviously false because it entails that reason always takes precedence as a motivator among other motivating influences, and hence, makes no allowance for moral weakness. This is a superficial objection, in need only of a statement of clarification to escape. Yet at least one prominent theorist in the subject, William Frankena, has at times seemed to criticize internalism in this way. 2)

Internalism is false because it is logically possible for a person to objectively have an obligation and yet have no motivation to act accordingly. This is also a position maintained by William Frankena, as we will see in Chapter 2. 3) Internalism is false because it is possible to make a moral judgment, even a genuine moral judgment, and not be motivated by it. Thus, Ronald Milo argues that a moral evaluative standard may be applied in order to make a moral judgment, and yet the moral agent remain completely unmoved by it.[7] 4) Internalism is false because it cannot account for moral indifferentism or amoralism generally. David Brink raises this objection, and claims that in light of it, externalism is obviously the preferable view.[8]

The objection which applies specifically to Rational Internalism that will also be considered in chapter four is the following: 5) Rational Internalism is inadequate because it fails to recognize the importance of compassion in ethical life. Using Kant as his target, William Prior raises this objection, suggesting that Rational Internalism gives a distortive account of moral life.[9]

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[7]Ronald Milo, "Moral Indifference," Monist 64 (June 1981): 373-93.

[8]David Brink, Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 49.

[9]William J. Prior, "Compassion: A Critique of Moral Rationalism," Philosophy and Theology, Vol. 2 (Winter 1989): 173-91.

The fifth chapter will be devoted to an examination of a sixth and final objection: Rational Internalism is false because reason just is the sort of faculty which is incapable of motivation. This, of course, is the objection raised by David Hume. The evaluation of this objection requires an exposition, explanation, and critical evaluation of Hume's ethical theory. I devote an entire chapter to Hume because I see his position as representing the most significant challenge to Rational Internalism. Because Kant is seen as a "paradigmatic Rational Internalism," a comparison and contrast of Kant and Hume is necessary. I will argue that once we are clear on what Kant means by his claim that reason, and reason alone, determines what is moral and motivates moral action, and once we are clear on what Hume means when he says that it is the passions that determine what is moral and motivate moral actions, the differences between their theories diminish radically. I will show that Kant's objections to moral sense theorists are inapplicable to Hume, and Hume's objections to moral rationalists are inapplicable to Kant; and also that there are substantial points of agreement between the two philosophers. Insofar as differences remain, I will argue, they pose no substantial objections to Rational Internalism. This chapter will begin with some preliminary work on the attempt to situate Hume in the

internalist/externalist debate in light of a contemporary controversy on this issue.

Having completed the defense of Rational Internalism in light of these objections, in the sixth chapter I will review and evaluate the contemporary defense of Rational Internalism given by Thomas Nagel in his book The Possibility of Altruism. I will address criticisms of his argument raised by E. J. Bond, and by Stephen Darwall, showing that their criticisms are based on misreadings or misunderstandings of Nagel's thesis.[10] This review will provide the opportunity to clarify the doctrine of Rational Internalism, to draw a distinction between Kant and Nagel's Rational Internalism, and finally (and ironically) to show that even Hume can be classified as a Rational Internalist, according to Nagel's description of the view.

In the seventh and concluding chapter, I will gather the threads of the preceding discussions together in order to give a full and clear characterization of the view I have called Rational Internalism. My thesis is that Rational Internalism, as I present it, presents a more clear and accurate view of the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation. Having identified and sorted through the various confusions and ambiguities

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[10]E. J. Bond, Reason and Value (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Stephan Darwall, Impartial Reason, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

inherent in the debate between internalism and externalism to date, we are in a position to establish the precise nature of this relationship. Much of the ambiguity has to do with the "generic" formulation of internalism as the view that "moral belief or judgment entails moral motivation." Rational Internalism explains, more adequately than previous versions of internalism, in what sense it is true to say that moral beliefs or judgments entail moral motivation. Therefore, as a theory of moral motivation, its accounts more adequately for the common intuition that people should be motivated by moral considerations, and that the justification for choosing to act morally need not be sought outside of the moral considerations themselves.

What I offer here is not a new theory of moral motivation. My version of Rational Internalism is consistent with the views of Kant and Nagel on this subject. However, I do offer a new statement of the connection between moral cognition and moral motivation which is more complete and accurate than statements in the previous literature on the subject. Since the debate in ethics between internalism and externalism has been the result of imprecision, incompleteness, and inaccuracy, an improved theory of moral motivation in its relation to moral cognition is a needed contribution.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNALIST/EXTERNALIST DISTINCTION IN ETHICS

Thomas Nagel, with the publication of his book, The Possibility of Altruism, popularized the distinction between ethical internalism and externalism.[1] In this work he revives the issue dividing Kant and Hume of whether or not reason, in and of itself, has a motivational influence--that is, whether reason has the power to move a person to action. His argument has two parts. He first attempts to show that reason can provide the motivation to act according to our own future self-interest. That is, reason can provide the motivation to act prudentially; reason can, independently of any operative desire, motivate us to act prudentially. Then, having prepared the way with his first argument, he develops a second, analogous argument which shows that reason also provides the motivation to act morally.

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[1]Thomas Nagel, The Possibility of Altruism; hereafter, PA in text.

To be sure, Nagel does not think that, once reason determines what is morally right, it automatically provides sufficient motivation in a particular case to do the right thing. But reason can, he thinks, provide motivation, such that in the absence of overpowering rival motives, reason can independently lead to moral action. In making this claim, Nagel situates himself within what he calls the "traditional controversy" in moral philosophy between "internalism" and "externalism. He cites the works of W. D. Falk and W. K. Frankena as the ethicians who introduced these terms and the corresponding distinction between alternative theories of moral motivation.

Nagel defines internalism as the view that:

> motivation must be so tied to the truth, or meaning, of ethical statements that when in a particular case someone is (or perhaps merely believes that he is) morally required to do something, it follows that he has a motivation for doing it (PA, 7).

He defines externalism as the view that "the necessary motivation is not supplied by ethical principles and judgments themselves, and that an additional psychological sanction is required to motivate our compliance" (PA, 7).

Clearly, Nagel thinks of the terms "internalism" and "externalism" as referring to differing theories of moral motivation, i.e., of what it is that explains that a person is motivated to act morally. But it may not be quite so clear what it means for motivation to be "tied to" or

"guaranteed by" the truth or meaning of ethical propositions. In commenting on this, Nagel apparently distinguishes between a weak internalism, where motivation is tied to the meaning of ethical utterances, and strong internalism, where motivation is tied to the truth of ethical propositions. In discussing the weak internalism, Nagel explains that one way moral philosophers have "tied" moral motivation to ethical propositions is by arguing that ethical propositions are just the sort of thing which express a person's inclinations. Ethical propositions are simply expressions of feelings or desires.

Thus, emotivism is an example of this weak internalism, because the emotivist claims that when a person utters an ethical proposition all the person is doing is venting his or her own emotional responses, and perhaps exhorting others to feel the same. The claim, "Stealing is wrong," is not a claim that has a truth value, but a claim that means that the speaker has a negative feeling regarding stealing, and therefore would be motivated to abstain from acts of stealing. Emotivists are internalists because they tie motivation to the meaning of ethical utterances, and they are "weak internalists" because they reject the view that there are moral truths; that is, because they reject "moral realism."

Nagel also describes a "stronger" version of internalism where moral motivation is tied--not only to the

meaning of ethical judgments--but to the recognition of those truths, so that once one affirms that one is obligated to do something, a motivation is therefore present. In this stronger version of internalism, moral truths are held to be truths independently of any particular person's desires or emotions. An ethical truth could never be a motivator if it were not present to consciousness in the form of recognition, but ethical truth is nevertheless itself held to be independent of any particular consciousness.

Nagel then identifies two other varieties of internalism, rational and anti-rational internalism. According to anti-rational internalism, the foundation of morality is desire, inclination or feeling. Nagel regards emotivism as anti-rational because it bases morality not on reason, but on personal inclination, desire or feelings, in such a way as to make morality a purely subjective matter. He regards Hobbes and Hume as anti-rationalists because he sees them both grounding morality in psychologically prevalent (Hume) or universal (Hobbes) motivational factors. For Hume, moral motivation is grounded in sympathy or general benevolence. Nagel states: "If we cast [Hume's] view in terms of reasons, it will state that among the conditions for the presence of a reason for action there must always be a desire or inclination capable of motivating one to act accordingly" (PA, 10). For

Hobbes, moral motivation is grounded in self-interest, that is, self-interest is the condition for having a moral (or any other) reason. According to rational internalism, on the other hand, moral reasons are not dependent "on the presence of a motivational factor prior to ethics, from which they are extracted as consequences" (PA, 11).

Nagel, then, is defending internalism over externalism, a strong version of internalism over the weak version, and rational internalism over anti-rational internalism. He defends a position on the issue which he claims clearly divides and distinguishes Kant's moral theory from that of Hume's. For Nagel, Kant is a paradigmatic example of a "rational internalist" since he argues that reason can not only autonomously make moral judgments, but can also be the source of an impetus, or motivation, to act accordingly, while Hume is a paradigmatic anti-rational internalist, since he argues that reason lacks both powers: it can neither make moral pronouncements, nor can it be the source of action. Nagel argues on the side of Kant by attempting to show that reason is practical. He defends a version of internalism which is self-consciously Kantian: Kant held that the categorical imperative exercised a direct and possibly decisive influence on the will; Nagel argues that there are "reasons for actions which are specifically moral," that is to say, sometimes we perform actions for no other reason

than that they are morally required (PA, 13).

But there seems to be some confusion in the distinctions Nagel draws between rational and antirational internalism and externalism. Internalists, he says, have identified various types of motivational factors. Nagel mentions sympathy, self-interest, benevolence as examples of internalist sources of motivation (PA, 7). But if internalism is defined as the theory of moral motivation according to which moral motivation is "directly tied" to the recognition of the truth of moral propositions or to the meaning of ethical utterances, and if externalism is defined as the theory of moral motivation which denies that there is such a direct tie but which maintains that some other "psychological" sanction is required for moral motivation, one wonders why theories that ground motivation in sympathy or self-interest or approval should be classified as "internalist" rather than "externalist." Isn't sympathy a psychological sanction? It certainly seems so. How exactly does Hume's concept of sympathy differ from "psychological sanctions" of the externalist? What really is the distinction between anti-rational internalism and externalism? Perhaps Nagel did not choose his words carefully when articulating his distinctions.

But the issue receives no clarification, only further confusion, when Nagel engages in a brief history of ethical philosophy in light of his internalist/externalist

distinction. His examples of externalists are Moore and Mill. His reason for classifying Moore as an externalist is poorly stated and consequently terribly vague. It actually seems that Nagel regards Moore as an externalist just because Moore did not give a forthright internalist account. Then Nagel says he suspects that Moore is an internalist "underneath it all" (PA, 7). But this claim is also far from clear. So Nagel's classifying Moore as an externalist does nothing to help us understand the externalist position.

Nagel's other example of an externalist is Mill. His explanation is contained in two sentences, somewhat more clear than the explanation for Moore, but nonetheless, not much. Mill is classified as an externalist because Mill thought it necessary to include a separate chapter on what he calls the "sanctions" for the principle of utility.[1] Nagel takes this to mean that the question of the truth of the principle of utility is separate from, that is, independent of, the explanation of why people act according to it. But the fact that Mill discusses these matters in separate sections of his book does not clearly indicate by any means that Mill is an externalist, as Nagel has

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[1]Christine Korsgaard follows Nagel's reasoning in her slightly more detailed account of the classification of Mill as an externalist. She stresses Mill's emphasis on the importance of education for morals. See her "Skepticism about Practical Reason," 10.

described externalism, nor does it shed any new light on what Nagel means by "externalism."

Mill may well have devoted a separate chapter to the question of moral justification just because we can and do ask these questions as two different questions: How do we know what is moral? What makes us act morally? So the fact that these two questions are separated in Mill's essay does not show that he believes that, within the individual agent, the recognition of a moral truth is separate from the motivation to act accordingly. The question of whether Mill is an internalist or an externalist according to some clear sense of this distinction, is important and will be given much more careful analysis later in this work. But an equally brief, and considerably more compelling argument that Mill is an internalist can be given right here.

Mill argues explicitly in Utilitarianism that, far more important for an understanding of morality than "external sanctions" (reward, punishment, the experience of approval or disapproval of others), is the ultimate "internal" sanction of the personal conscience.[2] We have a conscience, Mill argues further, only because we have the capacity for sympathy; so we could say that the ultimate sanction is sympathy, or is based in sympathy. Thus, Mill

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[2]John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, ed. Oskar Piest, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1957), 34-37.

is saying that we recognize something as right or wrong because we experience sympathy, and sympathy provides the motivation to act morally (i.e, in accord with the principle of utility.) But then Mill is an internalist according to Nagel's definition of internalism: the motivation to act morally is "tied to the recognition of the truth of a moral proposition" because both are a function of sympathy.

This argument does not rule out the possibility that there are both "internal" and "external" aspects to Mill's theory. For Mill obviously recognizes that fear of punishment and hope of regard are also motivating factors--that is, he grants that there are "external" reasons for acting morally. But the present point is that Mill certainly holds that there are other than "external" reasons which provide moral motivation as well. And this brings us back to wondering if Nagel's distinction between "internalism" and "externalism" is really clear enough to do important philosophical work.

It may be that lack of clarity in the distinction between externalism and anti-rationalism is not of crucial importance in Nagel's overall project. For his primary intent is to defend the view that reason has, in and of itself, practical import. He has simply adopted an available terminology in an attempt to clarify his own position by contrasting it with another ("externalism"),

though he need not have. On the other hand, since he does characterize his own position as a version of rational "internalism", his defense of his position would be much more complete if he had provided a more careful account of "externalism."

Suppose we interpret Nagel's rational internalism to be what his words say it is: as the view that moral motivation is tied to the recognition of moral truths through reason, without it being clear as yet what "tied to" means here. Then anti-rational internalism is the view that moral motivation is tied to the recognition of moral truth, but not through reason; and externalism is the view that moral motivation is simply not tied at all to either the meaning or the recognition of moral truths. One can very well wonder whether an example of an externalist can be found in the entire history of moral philosophy, and further, whether externalism is a viable or serious position a moral philosopher could even take. For Nagel's formulation makes externalism out to be a very unattractive moral theory, indeed something of a "straw-man."

If externalism is the view not only that one can recognize that an act is morally required and yet have absolutely no motivation to act accordingly on that account, but also that motivation to act morally must arise from something completely outside of the moral agent and his or her moral knowledge and apprehension of moral

meaning, such as brute fear of punishment or hope of reward from an external authority, then it seems to be a theory which applies appropriately only to children, or very child-like individuals. It is doubtful if it is a moral theory at all. So no wonder it is difficult to find an example of it in the history of ethical theory. On the other hand, there may be other ways to characterize externalism in which it is a respectable, perhaps even seriously defensible, theory of moral motivation.

Since the distinction between internalism and externalism is either not clearly drawn, or is drawn in a problematic way by Nagel, and given the ambiguity and apparent difficulty of the classification of moral theories as internalist or externalist we have noted, it seems appropriate to see how the originators of the distinction drew it. According to Nagel, the originator of the terms "internalism and "externalism" as identifying theories about moral motivation was William Frankena, who he says derived the distinction in turn from W. D. Falk. Let us begin with Falk.

A perusal of Falk's article "'Ought' and Motivation," within the context of recent moral philosophy, draws one's attention immediately to a peculiarity.[3] Clearly, when

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[3]W. D. Falk, "'Ought' and Motivation," Ought, Reasons, and Morality (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 21-42. First Published in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 48 (1947-48), 492-510.

Nagel refers to internalism and externalism, he is referring to contrasting theories of moral motivation. So, too, are Frankena, Korsgaard, and the others who have later used this distinction. Moreover, since Frankena says he borrows the terms from Falk, one is naturally led to think that Falk also used the terms to refer to contrasting theories of moral motivation. But Falk does not. In fact, he never uses the terms "internalism" and "externalism" in this way.

Instead, Falk makes use of a distinction between "internalist" and "externalist" senses of the word "ought" in order to contrast different sorts of reasons that people have for doing something. He points out that sometimes when a duty is recognized, "I ought" means "I am from outside of myself demanded to do some act."[4] Such an obligation might be a result of a rule or command imposed by a parent, a relation, a deity, a cultural norm or a civil law. But he holds there is also a sense of "ought" which comes from within: that is, which is a result of an internal recognition of the fact that something is a duty. His point is that we recognize that we have obligations not just because of dictates that come from without, but also because of dictates that come from within. Falk therefore applies the terms "internalist" and "externalist" not to

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[4]Ibid., 32.

distinct theories of motivation, but to distinct types of reasons which ground our decisions for action, and which provide the motivation for those actions. On the other hand, Falk does, as we shall see, offer a theory of moral motivation as a consequence of the development of his distinction between "internal" and "external" senses of "ought."

Falk makes this distinction in order to explain the existence of a confusion he perceived in the moral philosophy of his day. I will give a summary of his argument in order to gain a firm understanding of his distinction between the internalist and externalist senses of "ought" and to provide a better background for the examination of a distinction between internalism and externalism as theories of moral motivation that Frankena later makes. We will see that the transition from Falk's distinction to Frankena's is anything but smooth.

Falk's aim in the article is to provide a critical evaluation of a position of Prichard's. In his lecture, "Duty and Interest," Prichard attacks the view he attributes to Bishop Butler that whenever we have a duty to do something, we have the motivation to fulfill the duty because fulfilling our duty is consistent with our own

good.[5] According to Falk, Prichard's attack, while pointed in the right direction, simply doesn't go far enough. Falk applauds Prichard for pointing out something that he considers obvious from common experience, that it simply is not necessarily the case that our duty coincides with our self-interest. Falk criticizes Prichard, however, for not being able to free himself from a misconception Prichard shares with Bishop Butler. The mistake is that Prichard follows Butler in accepting the question, "Why should I be moral?" as a legitimate one. Prichard errs, Falk holds, in accepting the view that there must be a justification for acting dutifully which is independent of the bare fact of the recognition of duty itself.

Prichard rejects Butler's answer to this question in terms of our own good, and replaces it with the following: We act morally because we have a desire to act morally. The same view is adopted by David Ross. Ross summarizes the position in these words:

> An act's being our duty is never the reason why we do it....[for] I did the act simply because it was my duty [means] I did the act because I knew, or thought it to be my duty, and because I desired to do it, as being my duty, more than I desired to do any other act.[6]

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[5]For an alternative reading of Butler's theory of moral motivation, see Amelie Rorty's "Butler on Benevolence and Conscience," Philosophy 53 (1978), 171-184.

[6]Quoted by Falk, 27.

Prichard and Ross posit a special desire that human beings have, the desire to act morally. This answer to the "Why be moral" question is supposed to establish what is missing in Butler's account. So what is missing in Butler's account is an explanation of how it is possible to act morally when doing so conflicts with our own self-interest. Butler fails to establish the necessary connection between the recognition that something is an obligation and the power to fulfill that obligation.

Falk's criticism is that Prichard's and Ross's accounts are similarly unsuccessful. Falk argues that our common experience clearly shows that it is simply not true that whenever we have an obligation we have a desire to fulfill it. Positing such a desire is not only untrue to our common experience, but in fact a superfluous attempt to explain the necessary connection between the recognition of duty and the motivation to act accordingly. The attempt is superfluous because Falk implies that this connection is already present in the recognition of duty. Prichard's view, Falk allows, is more in tune with "common convictions" than is Butler's, because it is more obvious that duty sometimes conflicts with self-interest than that duty sometimes conflicts with desire. That is, it is perfectly thinkable that a person would do something, because it is his or her duty, even though it conflicts with their perceived self-interest. It is less clear in

common experience, that some one would act dutifully and contrary to self-interested desires and yet not have some sort of a desire to do so, even if the desire is not a self-interested one. Falk explains that the reason why it may not be obvious that duty does sometimes conflict with desire because there is a tendency to equate the concept of "having a motive" with the concept of "having a desire." He distinguishes two senses of "having a motive:" an "occurrent sense and a "dispositional" sense. When we have a motive in the occurrent sense, we have it "actually" and it is experienced as a desire. When we have a motive in the dispositional sense, we have it "potentially and reflectively," but we do not necessarily experience that motive as an occurrent desire. He states:

> But if, in the occurrent sense, there is at least a close connection between 'having a motive' and 'desiring', in the dispositional sense there is none whatever. Here a person is said to have a motive when the thought of some act (either as such, or as having some property or effect) is capable of determining him to do it; and that someone would be made to do some act if he dwelt on the thought of it in no way entails that he is being made, or desires to do it.[7]

Falk's point is that just as it is possible to act contrary to self-interest in the fulfillment of duty, it is possible to act contrary to or independently of any desire the moral agent is presently experiencing. In fact, Falk implies that the essence of acting dutifully can be best

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[7]Ibid.

understood in light of the possibility of acting independently of any occurrent desire. The agonizing experience of the recognition of a duty when its fulfillment requires struggle and sacrifice is lost with the introduction of the concept of the "desire" to act dutifully. In such circumstances, the natural and accurate response is: "I have no desire to fulfill my duty in this case." This is a key experience which ought to be captured and explained by moral theory. Falk's contention is that the only way to pay tribute to this experience is to deny that the question of moral justification, the question "Why be moral?" is a legitimate one. For Falk, to ask this question is automatically to abandon the meaning of a moral imperative. Falk's position, then, is inspired by the Kantian claim that moral commands cannot be cast in hypothetical terms. A duty cannot not be explained in terms of other goals or purposes. It simply exists on its own right. And the recognition thereof is a sufficient condition for the fulfillment of duty. Thus Falk claims:

> It seems paradoxical that moral conduct should require more than one kind of justification.... 'You have made me realize that I ought, now convince me that I really need to' seems a spurious request, inviting the retort 'if you really were convinced of the first, you would not seriously doubt the second'.[8]

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[8]Ibid., 29.

The critique of Prichard's position comprises the first part of Falk's article, but it is in the second part of the article that Falk introduces the terms internalism and externalism. The second part of his article is an attempt to explain the occurrence of the mistaken question, "Why be moral?" Falk argues that the confusion in Prichard's, Ross's and Butler's attempt to identify a justification for morality emanates from an ambiguity in both ordinary language and in moral theory in the use of words like "ought" and "duty."

Sometimes when we say "I ought," we mean that we are required to act or refrain from acting by demands which are given by some external authority such as a parent, priest, or political authority. Thus, Falk claims that some moral theories view obligation as a result of a "demand, made on [us] without regard to [our] desires; and...<u>this demand issues essentially from outside the agent</u>: that, whether made by a deity or society, or the situation...it has an objective existence of its own."[9] When we use "ought" in this sense we are using it in an "externalist" sense. Falk says that when we use ought in the externalist sense, it makes perfect sense, and is entirely natural, to ask: Why should I do what I ought to do? He states: "the view that morality needs some sanction is a traditional associate of

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[9]Ibid., 32.

all views of this kind and indeed their natural corollary."[10] It is entirely possible that one would have a total lack of motivation to fulfill a demand which is imposed on us by a deity, by society or by a "situation." At least part of the reason for this is that it is perfectly natural to question the legitimacy of those demands.

But Falk insists that there is another sense of ought which cannot be reduced to an external demand, but is a result of an inner (internal) conviction that something is a duty. This Falk calls the "purely formal motivation" sense of "ought."[11] In respect to this sense of "ought," it is absurd to demand any further justification; the moral imperative and the conviction that a moral imperative exists, is all the justification required. The purely formal motivation sense of "ought" is "formally complete," meaning that we need not look beyond the recognition of the moral obligation for the motivation to comply with it. Thus, Falk states: "It is when such an 'ought' is identified with a moral 'ought' or duty that the connection of duty with sufficient motivation becomes <u>logically necessary</u>."[12]

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 34.

[12]Ibid., 39.

So Falk suggests that the demand for justification of morality is often a result of the ambiguity in the use of the word "ought." We slip rather easily from one use to the other and so demand for both sorts of uses a justification only appropriate for one use. The demands given to us by our deities or by our cultures are absorbed, ingrained, rethought and appropriated as dictates, not just of external forces or authorities, but of our own internal consciences. When the dictate is an internal one, commanded by a person aware of the "capacity of reasoned choice," Falk claims that all the motivation required to bring the command to fruition is present. The reason <u>that</u> something is a duty is, he says, all the motive required.

It should be obvious by now that while Falk uses the terms "internalist" and "externalist" to refer to different senses of "ought," he also, in the development of that distinction, offers a theory of moral motivation. I have noted an awkwardness in referring to Falk as an ancestor of the distinction between internalism and externalism as theories of moral motivation: he manifestly does not introduce these terms as referring to theories of moral motivation. Nevertheless, Falk commits himself to a theory of moral motivation according to which moral motivation is a logical consequence of the acknowledgement, in the form of a "inner dictate of conscience," of the existence of a duty. The theory of moral motivation to which he adheres

is one, he thinks, which is clearly operative in ordinary moral consciousness. Since he allows that there are "internal reasons" for actions which can motivate the fulfillment of moral obligation independently of any concern for self-interest, and independently of any desire, it is natural to think of him as holding an "internalist" theory of moral motivation.[13] Therefore, thinking of him as the originator of the distinction between "internalist" and "externalist" theories of moral motivation is not altogether inappropriate, as long as one recognizes that that distinction is only hinted at in his works, and remains undeveloped. We can take clues about what for him would be an internalist theory of moral motivation by attending to the theory of motivation he is defending, and about what for him would be an externalist theory of moral motivation by attending to the views he is rejecting.

Falk cites Kant as the sole moral philosopher who gives an account of the "purist" view of "ought" and motivation, and thus the only philosopher who adequately pays tribute to the common notion that if something is a duty it commands absolutely, that is, independently of self-interest or desire, and that the command, in and of

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[13]Frankena clearly interprets Falk as holding an "internalist" theory of moral motivation. See his article, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy," in A. I. Meldon Essays in Moral Philosophy (Seattle, 1958), 75.

itself, has a motivating power. Falk is himself offering a Kantian view in that he holds that motivation to act morally is implicit in the thought that something is a duty. He agrees with Kant that it is simply tautological that "anyone who has a duty has, on this account alone, a reason, though not necessarily an impulse or desire, sufficient for doing the act."[14]

If we interpret Falk as providing an "internalist" theory of moral motivation based on the fact that he insists on the internal sense of "ought" as the "purely formal motivation sense," then an "externalist" theory of moral motivation would be one which insisted on the necessity of what he calls "external sanctions": sources of motivation which are external to the recognition of duty itself. Falk offers Kant as the only example of a moral philosopher who gives an account of the necessary connection between duty and motivation, and hence, as the only example of an "internalist." The examples of externalists he gives would be Butler, because he sees self-interest as a necessary sanction of morality, Prichard, because he sees a desire to do what is moral as a necessary sanction of morality, and any divine command or cultural relativist theorist because they hold that duty

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[14]Falk, "'Ought' and Motivation," 35.

arises from sources external to the moral agent, and thus allow the moral agent to always ask: Why be moral?

Although Falk does not develop a distinction between internalist and externalist theories of moral motivation in detail, it is clear that the lines he draws between "internalism" and "externalism" are not the same as those drawn by Nagel. We can at this point say that given Nagel's description of a strong version of internalism, Falk would be classified as an internalist because it is clear that he believes that the recognition of the truth of ethical propositions guarantees a motivational influence. The motivational influence is guaranteed because he believes that it is tautological that anyone who recognizes an "ought" in the internal sense has ipso facto a reason or motive for doing it. But beyond this we cannot say that Nagel and Falk draw the lines between internalism and externalism in the same way. For instance, following our interpretation, Falk would classify Prichard as an externalist, but Nagel could classify him as an internalist because Prichard "ties" moral motivation to the recognition of moral obligation through the "desire to act morally." Analogously, Falk would classify Butler as an externalist, but Nagel could classify him as an internalist because Butler "ties" moral motivation to the recognition of moral obligation through self-interest. Also, Nagel classifies Hobbes as an internalist, but it is not at all clear that

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Falk would, since he regards self-interest as an "external sanction." Nagel refers to emotivists as weak internalists, but Falk rejects the view that moral obligations can be understood simply in terms of "occurrent" desires or motives. He allows that moral obligations can be regarded as "objectively valid," and that even when we are not feeling reasonable, that we can be motivated to act morally.[15] Therefore, there are some grounds upon which to infer that Falk would classify emotivists as externalists. Further, while Falk can be seen as giving clear examples of externalists, Nagel does not. We see, then, that while Nagel identifies Falk as one of the originators of the distinction between internalism and externalism as theories of moral motivation, there is ample evidence that they do not, or would not, conceive the distinction in the same way. We now turn to the other originator of the distinction between internalist and externalist theories of moral motivation, William Frankena.

Frankena, begins his article "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy" by expressing his intent to focus on the question of the connection between moral judgment and moral motivation.[16] As noted earlier, Frankena "borrows" Falk's terminology, and refers to the

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[15]Ibid., 38-39.

[16]William K. Frankena, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy."

two opposing views on this connection as "internalism" and "externalism." Given the problems of classification of traditional moral philosophers as internalists or externalists, it is essential to attend carefully to Frankena's wording as he defines the two theories.

In a rough characterization, Frankena describes externalists as "those who regard motivation as external to obligation," and internalists as "those who regard motivation as internal to obligation."[17] Somewhat more carefully, he offers the following: "Externalists insist that motivation is not part of the analysis of moral judgments or of the justification of moral claims." Internalists, on the other hand, hold that motivation is "involved in the analysis of moral judgments and so is essential for an action's being or being shown to be obligatory."[18] Exactly what it means for motivation to be internal or external "to obligation," or to be "part of the analysis of moral judgments" is not initially clear. Frankena states near the beginning of his work that his sympathies have always been with externalism, though he is not as sure as he used to be that his sympathies are correct.[19] He gives us no clear indication during the

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[17]Ibid., 40-41.

[18]Ibid., 41.

[19]Ibid., 41-42.

article of why he now takes internalism more seriously. Indeed, beyond the initial comments just mentioned, he really gives no indication that he does. Nor does he claim to provide conclusive evidence for one theory over the other. He does not examine any specific arguments in great detail. Rather, he reviews the works of a large number of philosophers who he regards as internalists, and raises some critical remarks. The article is long and rambling, and one senses that throughout Frankena may actually be struggling to sort out for himself just what "internalism" and "externalism" are as theories of moral motivation, rather than trying to conclude for one over the other.

Since our goal here is to try to get clear on what Frankena means by the terms, I will not comment on Frankena's critique or interpretation of the many philosophers he considers. Instead, I will focus on identifying what it is that is at issue <u>for Frankena</u> in the debate between internalism and externalism. I will glean from Frankena's critical comments of the several philosophers what it has been that attracts him so much towards externalism, and what advantage of internalism disturbs his tranquil acceptance of externalism.

Frankena explains his long-standing preference for externalism in his introduction as follows: "It has not seemed to me inconceivable that one should have an obligation and recognize that one has it and yet have no

motivation to perform the required act."[20] The same concern is reiterated at various points of his article, as summaries of his basic criticism of various "internalist" positions. Three representative examples of his basic criticism are the following: 1) "Logically, as far as I can see, 'I should' and 'I shall' are distinct, and one can admit that he ought and still not resolve to do."[21] 2) "As far as I can see, an act may be morally wrong even though I am impelled to do it after full reflection. What one is impelled to do even after reason has done its best is still dependent on the vagaries of one's particular conative disposition, and I see no reason for assuming that it will always coincide with what is in fact right or regarded as right."[22] 3) "The record of human conduct is not such as to make it obvious that human beings always do have some tendency to do what they regard as their duty."[23]

Thus, internalism, Frankena is saying, is an inadequate theory because it fails to account for the fact that one can have and even recognize an obligation without thereby having a tendency, without being impelled or without necessarily being led to resolve to or actually to

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[20]Ibid., 42.

[21]Ibid., 71.

[22]Ibid., 77.

[23]Ibid., 79.

fulfill the obligation. In short, internalism is inadequate because it fails to account for the fact that moral judgment and the motivation to act morally are distinct and separable.

If internalism is the theory of moral motivation according to which the recognition of a moral obligation automatically implies an overriding motivation, that is, a motivation stronger or over-powering than all other motivations pertaining to self-interest, desire, emotions or any other non-moral inclination, then it surely would be a theory we could dismiss without much consternation. In passages one and two above, Frankena could be interpreted as considering this the position he calls "internalist." But an alternate version calls internalism the view that the recognition of moral obligation necessarily implies at least some motivation. Passage three suggests this interpretation. Now Frankena wants to deny that even this is true, and it appears that in this denial he thinks of himself only as attempting to preserve accuracy in the account of human moral conduct. Our everyday moral experience testifies to the fact that sometimes we know we ought to do something, and yet we have no desire to do it. It seems best to say that this common experience is what is really at issue for Frankena in the internalist/externalist debate. Insofar as either version of internalism fails to accommodate this recurring fact in our moral experience, it

is an inadequate doctrine.

Why is it that Frankena thinks that externalism is a preferable theory in light of this issue? The first clue comes from his characterization of all externalist theories. After identifying intuitionism, cultural relativism, utilitarianism, and divine command theories as examples of externalism, Frankena states: "For all such theories, obligation represents a fact or requirement which is external to the agent in the sense of being independent of his desires or needs."[24] There are two aspects of externalism, then, which Frankena sees as crucial: first, that obligation has an objective quality independent of subjective concerns or apprehension; second, that we are bound by objective obligation whether or not we have any desire to act accordingly. Obviously, given these characteristics, Frankena also identifies Kant as an externalist. That these are the key issues in the debate between internalism and externalism is verified in a concluding passage:

> What [the externalist] must deny, and the internalist assert, is that <u>having objectively</u> a certain moral obligation logically entails have some motivation for fulfilling it, that justifying a judgment of objective moral obligation logically implies establishing or producing a motivational buttress....[25]

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[24]Ibid., 43.

[25]Ibid., 73, emphasis added.

Frankena's dissatisfaction with internalism hinges on its view of obligation as subjective or as necessarily connected with desire and inclination. In a concluding statement where he claims to pinpoint the "true character of the opposition" between internalism and externalism and the shortcomings of each, he describes the alternatives as follows:

> Externalism...in seeking to keep the obligation to act in certain ways independent of the vagaries of individual motivation, runs the risk that motivation may not always be present, let alone adequate, but internalism, in insisting on building in motivation, runs the corresponding risk of having to trim obligation to the size of individual motives.[26]

Frankena thus admits that externalism is not a wholly satisfactory theory because it has a problem about absent motivation, but he thinks that the problem of internalism is a greater defect.

Actually, Frankena's position is somewhat inconsistent, for Frankena doesn't really believe that morality need be backed by motivation at all. Recall that his objection to internalism is that, by "building" motivation into the analysis of moral judgments, internalism does a disservice to morality by reducing ethical judgments to subjective desires. The most extreme version of this is emotivism which holds that motivation is "part of the analysis of moral judgments" by claiming that

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[26]Ibid., 80.

judgments of obligation are nothing but utterances expressing emotive inclination. But Frankena wants to insist that moral obligation is not, and need not be, backed by motivation.

The problem Frankena is raising is how to explain the possibility of fulfilling obligations which are inconsistent with or independent of personal desires and motives. But he explicitly prohibits the use of motivation as the explanatory factor. The reason for this is that he thinks of motives as just the sort of things that are a result of personal desires, emotions, needs and interests. Along the same line, he claims that a distinction must be made between two types of reasons for actions. Borrowing loosely from F. Hutcheson, he divides reasons for actions between those that are "justifying reasons" and those that are "exciting reasons."[27] Exciting reasons are those which are geared toward personal goals and desires; justifying reasons are simply based on moral judgment.[28] Frankena clearly thinks that justifying reasons can never be

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[27]Ibid., 44.

[28]Loosely, because it is not at all clear that this is the distinction Hutcheson makes. Hutcheson does not identify exciting reasons with self-interested ones. Exciting reasons include, besides inclinations for the satisfaction of personal desire, inclinations for benevolence and sympathy. I interpret Hutcheson as viewing justifying reasons as exciting reasons that have been approved by moral sense. See F. Hutcheson, Illustrations upon Moral Sense in D. D. Raphael's British Moralists 1650-1800 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 361.

"exciting" ones: "Thus a motive is one kind of reason for action, but not all reasons for action are motives."[29] And further: "it is not plausible to identify motives with reasons for regarding an action as morally right or obligatory."[30]

This examination of Frankena's arguments indicates clearly that he is using the term "motivation" in quite a different sense from Falk. For Frankena, motivation is a subjective matter, always referring to the presence of subjective needs, desires, or interests which are perceived by the agent as "exciting reasons." Falk, on the other hand denies the association between "motives" and "desires." In fact, he says that while there is a connection between desires and motives, and while in ordinary speech we tend to refer to desires as motives, technically speaking, desire is "perceptual evidence" of an impulse or motive. He says that we tend to experience desire when our impulses are impeded, but that we have motives without the experience of any desire at all.[31] Thus Falk uses the term "motive" in a much broader sense. He states:

> In the sense relevant to this discussion, a reason or motive is a moving or impelling

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[29]Ibid., 44.

[30]Ibid., 45.

[31]Falk, "'Ought' and Motivation," 25.

> thought, the thought of that for the sake, or in view of which, some act is done...I should therefore, describe a motive as a causa rationis, a mental antecedent which, when attended to by a person, and in otherwise comparable conditions, will invariably be followed by an orientation of his organism towards the action thought of, in a way which, except for the intervention of distractions, counter-motives and physical impediments, will terminate in the action itself.[32]

For Falk, a "justifying reason" can be considered a "exciting reason" because it can impel one to action and because the category of "exciting reasons" is drawn so broadly as to include all such reasons. Frankena should have seen that Falk was using "motivation" in this broader sense. What is even more peculiar is that Frankena, while having labelled Kant an externalist, calls Falk an internalist. And yet, as we saw, Falk gives a characteristically Kantian analysis of morality, insisting that it is inappropriate to suggest that morality is dependent on the presence of desire, and holding that, in the truly moral sense of "ought," (the internal sense as he distinguished the two), there is a motivation, or power, to actualize moral commands.

It would seem to have been incumbent on Frankena to either use the term "motivation" consistently with Falk, in light of the fact that he was borrowing Falk's terminology to label his theories of moral motivation, or else to warn us of the differences. Unless the reader recognizes that

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[32]Ibid.

Frankena uses the term "motivation" in a more restricted sense, it remains unclear why he thinks that externalism is a superior moral theory, and why he objects to Falk's suggestion that there can be impelling, that is, motivating, reasons for action which are the result of autonomous commands.

The difference between Falk's and Frankena's actual views about the relation of morality and motivation are more apparent than real. They both want moral theory to account for the basic moral experience of recognizing that one ought, without necessarily having an associated desire. Thus Frankena objects as strongly as Falk to those moral theorists who posit a desire behind the acceptance of moral judgments. Both are also suspicious of those who demand an account of moral motivation independent of the recognition and acceptance of moral judgments. The real difference between Falk and Frankena is that while Frankena implies that there is a mysterious connection between moral judgments and moral motivation, Falk, like Kant, attributes to reason the power to impel a person to moral action. In Frankena's language, Falk sees no problem in thinking of "justifying" reasons has having an "exciting" power.

What has been learned in this review of the literature Nagel cites as the origin of the terms "internalism" and "externalism" as the names of competing theories of moral motivation? The most obvious lesson is that there is a

decided lack of unanimity in the use of the very terms that interest us. Falk, who first used the terms, used them to refer to different senses of the word "ought." The external sense of "ought" views obligation as something imposed on the moral agent "from outside." The internal sense of "ought" views obligation as emanating from the moral agent. The moral agent judges that something is right or wrong. However, implicit in his distinction between the internal and external senses of "ought," and in his critique against the views of Butler and Prichard and all those who neglect what he calls "the purely formal motivation sense of ought," is the claim that a moral judgment, in and of itself, has the power to motivate, that is, to be the cause of a moral action. Hence, Falk does defend a theory of moral motivation which may reasonably be called "internalist," due to his claim that the "internal" recognition that something is a duty can by itself, without the aid of desire or any other external sanction.

Frankena's main goal is to draw attention to the inadequacy of theories which assert a necessary tie between moral obligation and motivation that is based on personal desires and inclinations. He defines internalism as the view that moral obligation is tied to motivation, which he views as grounded in desire and self-interest, and externalism as the view that moral obligation is independent of personal desires. He errs in labelling Falk

an internalist, according to Frankena's own use of these labels; for Falk accepts the Kantian view that moral obligation is wholly independent of personal desires and self-interest. Frankena was lead to this error by failing to recognize that his use of the term "motivation" is more restricted than Falk's.

Now when Nagel uses the term "motivation," he uses it in the same broad sense as Falk did. He does not, like Frankena, restrict motivation to desire or self-interest. This helps explain why Nagel's and Frankena's definitions of internalism and externalism lead, as noted above, to inconsistent classifications of traditional moral philosophers. They both use the terms internalism and externalism to name competing theories of moral motivation; but they use the term "motivation" in significantly different ways. For example: Frankena calls Kant an externalist because Kant believes that moral obligation is completely independent of personal desires and interests; that is, obligation is separated from, "external" to motivation in his sense. Nagel, however, calls Kant an internalist, because Kant maintains that reason has the power to produce moral action, that reason is a kind of motivation in his and Falk's broader sense of this term.

Frankena and Falk's classifications of moral philosophers into their respective internalist/externalist frameworks are not always contradictory; but consistency

between them is merely accidental, being based on very different criteria. For example, when Frankena calls emotivism an internalist position, he does so because according to the emotivist, moral obligation is "internal to," indeed is nothing but a reflection of the emotive inclinations of particular persons. Nagel also calls emotivism an internalist position. But he does so because, for the emotivist, motivation is an integral part of the acceptance of moral judgments. Frankena, in his classification, emphasizes the basis of obligation as being internal or external. Nagel emphasizes the nature of the connection between motivation, in the broad Falkian sense, and moral judgments themselves. Frankena's rejection of internalism is a consequence of his belief in the objectivity of ethics, and his belief that obligation is independent of personal desires and emotional responses. Nagel's rejection of externalism is a consequence of his belief that moral judgments based on reason have a necessary influence on our conduct.

In fact, while Nagel is an internalist by his own use of these categories, he is an externalist in Frankena's sense of the term because Nagel holds that obligation is independent of self-interest, desire or emotion. It would also seem that Frankena--an externalist is his own terms--must be considered an internalist according to Nagel's definition, because Frankena certainly does not hold that

all moral motivation (excluding self-interest, desire, inclination) is externally induced. This point, however, is not very clear, since Frankena offers no explanation in the article considered here for the possibility of moral conduct independent of desire.

Now that the lack of consistency in the original definitions of ethical internalism and externalism has been established, it will be interesting to see whose definition dominates later uses of the terms, or to see what further developments in the distinction arise. In the review of subsequent literature on this subject the following questions should provide a focus: Are later uses identical to Frankena's or to Nagel's? Is there a development in the use of the terminology such that the terms come to mean something else again? Given that definitions of internalism and externalism are stipulative (we can mean by them anything that we want to), is there a definition which is more helpful or of greater philosophical interest?

CHAPTER II

ETHICAL INTERNALISM AND EXTERNALISM IN RECENT PHILOSOPHICAL LITERATURE

A survey of more recent philosophical literature on the internalist/externalist distinction in ethics shows that later thinkers adopt the distinction to refer to theories of moral motivation, and not just as a distinction between different senses of "ought" described by Falk. We will also see that later thinkers are divided in their use of the distinction, even though no recognition of this confusion is given. Some philosophers follow Frankena's understanding of the distinction, and others follow Nagel's. In some cases, refinements of those positions can be detected upon a close reading of the texts. This chapter reviews the literature employing the internalist/externalist distinction from the publication of Nagel's The Possibility of Altruism (1970) to the present. The first section will concentrate on those who follow in Frankena's steps, the second, on those who follow in

Nagel's. In the following chapter, the various definitions will be evaluated in terms of usefulness and philosophical interest.

First, however, one may wonder how the distinction could have been used by otherwise acute thinkers in such disparate ways without some awareness, and so without some admission of awareness of the disparity. A partial explanation is that there is a way of formulating the distinction which can apply to both Nagel's and to Frankena's uses of it, and also to later developments of it by Korsgaard and Brown. Such a "generic" definition of internalism would say that it is the theory that moral judgment implies or entails motivation; similarly, the "generic" definition of externalism sees it as the theory that moral judgment does not imply or entail motivation. These generic formulations can be found in Frankena's article "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy" and, as we will see, also in later works by other philosophers. We may say that these generic formulations express a common factor of all uses where the internalist/externalist distinction is taken to apply to theories of moral motivation.[1]

From the analysis in Chapter One, we can say that for both Frankena and Nagel moral judgment does imply (in some

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[1]Frankena, 51.

way) motivation, because for Frankena the internalist holds that a person recognizes moral obligation only if motivation is present, and for Nagel the internalist holds that motivation is "tied" (in some way or other) to the recognition of moral obligation. Thus we can say that the generic formulation of the internalism/externalism distinction is inclusive of both their uses of the distinction, and that they and other thinkers adopt various versions on the basis of how the entailment implication, or other "tie" (or lack of it) is to be understood. The problems arise when thinkers present their own specification of generic internalism or of generic externalism, but then refer to other thinkers' versions not as different variations on the same generic theme, but as positions which are reflective of what is opposite (i.e., internalism to their externalism or externalism to their internalism.)

I

Three philosophers who seem to think of themselves as adopting Frankena's version of the distinction are Ronald Milo, John Robertson and Byron Haines. While they phrase their definitions in original terms, it is clear that their basic understanding is significantly influenced by Frankena. Each of these writers attempts to undermine what they regard as the internalist thesis.

Ronald Milo, in his article "Moral Indifference" claims that "the thesis of internalism" is that "it is a necessary condition of believing (or judging) that one has a moral obligation to do (or not to do) an action that one have a pro- (or con-) attitude toward it."[2] There are obvious correlations between this definition and that of Frankena's. If having a pro-attitude toward a course of action is a necessary condition for believing that it is morally required, then motivation is indeed "internal" to obligation. However, it is not identical to the essential distinction between internalism and externalism made by Frankena.

Frankena reviews various ways the internalist thesis might be advanced: the proposition that "having or

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[2]Milo, 375.

acknowledging an obligation to do something involves having, either occurrently or dispositionally, some motivation for doing it" might mean, for instance, that when one thinks, sees, or believes that one has an obligation, motivation is also present; or it might mean that when one assents to an obligation, or when one says one has an obligation, motivation is present.[3] In reviewing these possibilities, Frankena concedes that even an externalist might accept these views--though a "compleat externalist" would not. He is ready to make such concessions because he believes that it is simply a psychological and phenomenological fact that believing or assenting involves an associated disposition. From Frankena's point of view, these concessions are peripheral because what is essential for him about externalism is that it denies that <u>having an obligation</u> (vs. believing or assenting to it) entails having the correlative disposition, and what is essential about internalism is that it claims that it does.[4] He concludes his article by

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[3]Frankena, 58-59.

[4]As previously quoted, Frankena states: "What he [the externalist] must deny, and the internalist assert, is that having objectively a certain moral obligation logically entails having some motivation for fulfilling it...that it is logically impossible for there should be a state of apprehending a moral obligation of one's own which is not accompanied by such a buttress..." 73.

suggesting that the most even-handed externalist would in fact make these concessions.

It is clear, then, that what Milo takes to be "the thesis of internalism," is not identical to what Frankena takes it to be.[5] Frankena would agree that Milo's formulation describes an internalist position, but he thinks of internalism more broadly. Milo defines internalism as the view that having a pro-attitude is a necessary condition of believing that one has an obligation; Frankena says that internalism is the view that having a pro-attitude is a necessary condition of having an obligation.

Milo criticizes Frankena, however, for making even these concessions to internalism. He suggests that Frankena only granted that believing oneself to be under obligation or assenting to the fact of obligation implies having motivation to act morally because of the influence of C. L. Stevenson and R. M. Hare.[6] Milo's efforts are directed toward undermining this view, and he does so by focussing on the phenomenon of moral indifference. I will summarize his argument in order to get clear on Milo's use of the distinction, and to benefit from whatever insights he has to offer on the problem of moral motivation.

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[5]Milo, 375.

[6]Ibid., 375.

Milo argues for the "externalist" thesis (as he sees it) that it is possible to believe that something is wrong and not have a con-attitude toward it, or to believe that something is right and not have a pro-attitude toward it. He does admit that the internalist thesis (as he defines it) is intuitively or superficially appealing. If we attend to the phenomena of believing or judging something to be wrong or right, initially it seems very plausible that such mental acts should be accompanied by a corresponding motivation. There just is something paradoxical about the person who fails to be motivated by his moral judgments. Milo begins by explaining why we find such a person paradoxical, and then proceeds to show that the internalist thesis, as he has formulated it, is false.

Normally, if a person says he believes that something is wrong, but does not have a negative attitude or disposition toward committing the act, or if he says he believes that something is morally required, but does not have a positive attitude or disposition toward it, we would be justified in labelling him as insincere.[7] Milo explains that we would ordinarily regard such a person as paradoxical because, in conversation, <u>saying</u> that something is wrong <u>conversationally implies</u> having a negative

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[7]A point made by C. L. Stevenson in <u>Ethics and Language</u> (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944), 16-17.

attitude toward it. That is, we are not generally moved to say something is wrong, to utter our disapproval, unless we have the corresponding negative attitude, and so others will ordinarily expect the talk and the attitude to go together. But this does not mean that it is impossible to believe that something is right or wrong without having the appropriate disposition toward it. Milo charges that to think this is impossible is to confuse "conversational implication" with "logical implication."[8]

Milo argues that it is possible for a person to be cognizant of a conventional belief that a certain type of act (X) is wrong, and to say on occasion say that "X is wrong" while only "paying lip-service" to the conventional standard. In such a case the person can be described as believing that something is wrong according to that standard without having the corresponding negative disposition towards the act because the person does not necessarily accept the standard.

Now an internalist would respond that this description is only possible because applying a standard on the grounds of convention or authority is not the same as applying an evaluative standard. That is, the person who merely applies a standard,

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[8]Milo makes use of the distinction made by H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in Syntax and Semantics, vol. 3 Speech Acts, Cole and Margan, ed. (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 45.

> can at most be said to believe (or judge) that X is wrong in an inverted-commas (rather than a genuinely evaluative) sense. What he believes (or judges) is merely that X is generally held (but not by him) to be wrong. And, if so, he will be making, not a genuinely evaluative moral judgment, but a merely descriptive moral judgment.[9]

Milo, however, argues that it is in fact possible to make a genuinely evaluative moral judgment without having an accompanying pro- or con-attitude.

He advances this argument by drawing a parallel between moral evaluative appraisals and evaluative appraisals of others sorts. He gives an example of a wine appraiser. A wine appraiser can judge certain wines to be good or bad independently of his own preferences in wine. A wine appraiser knows what is regarded, among wine connoisseurs, as a good wine, but may prefer a wine which does not meet these standards as well as another. Milo finds the distinction made by Nowell-Smith between judgments of appraisal and judgments of preference useful here.[10] A judgment of preference is obviously accompanied by a pro- or con-attitude, but a judgment of appraisal is not. Just as a wine appraiser can judge a wine to be better than another according to accepted standards in the wine-making industry without actually preferring it, so a person familiar with the characteristics of a moral point

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[9]Milo, 380.

[10]See P. H. Nowell-Smith, Ethics (London: Penguin Books, Ltd. 1954), 170.

of view can judge an action to be better than another without actually preferring it. In each case, Milo claims, the person is making a genuinely evaluative judgment, and the question of the person's pro- or con-attitude is an independent question.

If a person makes a judgment from the moral point of view and lacks the appropriate disposition, the person is morally indifferent; he or she may even be an amoralist. Milo goes so far as to say that even an amoralist, if well enough informed about the moral point of view and if intellectually acute, could be sought out by others for advice about moral matters. If the amoralist is good at applying the standards of the moral point of view, the question of his or her lack of a pro-attitude towards it is a separate question. Thus, the amoralist would be saying that something is "morally required or morally wrong from the moral point of view," but without any motivation for or against that point of view." So "X is wrong" is short for "X is wrong from the moral point of view," and such statements are evaluative moral claims.

Milo argues convincingly that having a moral belief or making a moral judgment does not necessarily imply the appropriate attitudes and dispositions. Since the judgment could be based on the mere application of a moral code, since the belief could be simply acquired by making a moral evaluation based on what others have called the "moral

point of view," moral judgment and moral belief need not be accompanied by a correlative attitude. These insights are a contribution to the internalist/externalist debate because they identify ways in which appropriate attitudes and dispositions may be absent, even when beliefs about what is morally required are present. Thus, Milo has successfully undermined the internalist thesis as he defines it: having a pro- or con-attitude is not a necessary condition of <u>believing or judging</u> something to be right or wrong. But it would be premature to say that Milo has successfully undermined <u>internalism</u>, since there are different ways of understanding this term.

Milo's argument does not undermine Frankena's version of internalism, since Frankena begins with a different understanding of what internalism is. Ultimately, however, it may be the case that Frankena's version of internalism may not be all that attractive of a theory anyway. Milo's argument could be taken as grounds for necessitating a modification of Nagel's version because Milo has shown that "recognizing" that something is right or wrong need not involve motivation (pro- or con-attitude) if "recognizing" merely involved the application of a moral standard or of the criteria of the moral point of view. But it does not undermine Nagel's version if Nagel's notion of "recognizing" a moral truth involves something more than the operations described by Milo. The extent to which

Milo's contributions are helpful, then, will have to be judged after this survey of the various ways of making the internalist/externalist distinction has been completed.

John Robertson follows Frankena's definition of internalism more closely than does Milo. He defines internalism as the view that "the truth of a claim ascribing a reason to an agent to perform a certain action or to aim at a certain goal entails that the agent has a desire that would be satisfied by performing that action or achieving that goal" and, borrowing Frankena's phrase, externalism as the view that "denies that reason ascriptions are thus 'hostage to the vagaries of individuals' desires.'"[11] It is clear that for Robertson what is at issue in the internalist/externalist debate is, as for Frankena, the objectivity of moral truths. However, there is a subtle difference, and also some development in the analysis. The difference is that he substitutes "having a reason to perform an action" for "having a moral obligation" that has the effect of broadening the application of the internalist/externalist distinction out

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[11]John Robertson, "Internalism about Moral Reason" Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 67 (1986): 124.

beyond the ethical and into a wider practical sphere.[12] The development is that Robertson distinguishes between extreme, moderate and ersatz internalism. Extreme internalism is the view that "aims and motives are not open to criticism at all," a position that he ascribes, problematically, I believe, to Hume. Ersatz internalism is an internalism which is really an externalism in disguise: moral and immoral agents are differentiated not by their desires but by their beliefs. Thus, Plato is an internalist because he maintains that they consider good what they desire, but an ersatz internalist because he holds all human beings desire what is really good and they simply make mistakes in judgment about what that really is. But then Plato is really an externalist because he believes that what is morally correct is so independently of any particular person's desires. Moderate internalism is, unfortunately not carefully described by Robertson; but one

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[12]This substitution may be a result of the influence of such philosophers as Gilbert Harman and Bernard Williams, who also speak of internal and external reasons for action that include but are not restricted to moral reasons. See Harman's "Moral Relativism Defended," The Philosophical Review 84 (1975): 3-22. and Williams' "Internal and External Reasons," originally published in Rational Action, ed., Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and reprinted in Moral Luck, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 101-113. References in this text are to the latter. Or, it may be the case that all these thinkers are influenced by Nagel's arguments in The Possibility of Altruism for the practical efficacy of reason, in matters of both prudence and morality, even though his use of the internal/external language differs from theirs.

is led to assume, given the characterizations of extreme and ersatz internalism that moderate internalism is one which allows some rational criticism of aims and motives. Yet in his criticism of moderate internalism, Robertson uses arguments which apply to extreme internalism, and one is left wondering what advantage is gained in the distinction between the two. Since the distinction between moderate and extreme internalism does not seem to be of any consequence, and it can be safely ignored in the remainder of this examination.

Robertson attempts to refute internalism (i.e. extreme rather than ersatz) by showing how ill-suited the theory is to account for the common experience of regret. We all know the pain of regret in having failed to act as we should have, or of having failed to recognize that we should have acted in a certain way. Any theory of morality, or of action generally, which fails to account for this experience, is clearly defective. He states: "Moderate internalism is wrong because it requires us to misdescribe certain familiar cases of realizing one has, and has had, reason to act differently than one has acted, as rather massive changes of taste...."[13] If we adopt internalism as our theory of moral motivation, he says we are committed to think of Scrooge as "a man whose level of

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[13]Robertson, 130.

"that one can have a reason for an action such as to justify that action only if one is motivated to that action," and externalism is the view that "a motive for an action is, in the logical sense, external to the action's being justified."[14] He comments on the fact that those who defend internalism typically reject the Kantian view that reason is a source of motivation, and side with Hume in his view of reason as powerless in motivation.[15] Note, however, that Nagel defends both internalism and the Kantian view of reason as "practically" motivating. Since Nagel is a key figure among those who have contributed to the literature on ethical internalism and externalism, Haines's listing of defenders of internalism is obviously selective.

Haines poses a key question: is reason, or is reason not, efficacious in bringing about moral motivation? But he does not, unfortunately, pursue this question, directing his attention instead to the weakness of internalism, as he and Robertson understand it. Haines' argument against internalism and in favor of externalism calls attention to important features of moral training subscribed to, he

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[14]Byron L. Haines, "Internalism and Moral Training," The Journal of Value Inquiry 20 (1986): 64 and 68, footnote 2.

[15]Haines cites Gilbert Harman as a philosopher who rejects the Kantian view of reason as a motivator and accepts the Humean view of reason as powerless in terms of motivation. See Harman's "Moral Relativism Defended."

claims, by most of humanity--even the internalists themselves--when they are not biased by their own philosophical views.

Haines offers two cases to advance his argument. One case involves the attempt of a parent to instruct a small child in a moral practice which is beyond the comprehensibility of the child. For instance, the practice of promising is a sophisticated practice requiring a significant degree of moral sensitivity and involving the assuming of a moral obligation, and the conferring of a right. Since the child lacks this understanding and sensitivity, says Haines, he or she will also lack any incentive for keeping promises. Haines's point is that the child has a reason, a moral obligation, to keep a promise irrespective of the lack of incentive or motivation. The second case involves the attempt of a parent to instruct an older child who already has motives for behaving in a certain way to behave in another way. For instance, the child, under the influence of peer pressure, uses racist slurs and insults against other children. The parent will feel that the child, even though not aware, has a reason to act differently. And the parent will hope that when the child comes to have an incentive to behave in the better way, it will be because of the recognition that one has a reason for doing so.

Haines' examples do not constitute a compelling argument against internalism as he defines it. In the first case, if the child is too young to understand what it means to make a promise, then the child doesn't really have an obligation to keep a promise. It seems worth asking if, when still unable to understand the practice, the child should be said to "have a reason" regarding promise-keeping. We would not dispute that <u>there is a reason</u> for the child to keep a promise, only that the young child should be said to <u>have a reason</u>. The same confusion underlies the second case. Clearly <u>there is a reason</u> for the child prone to racial slurs to refrain from uttering them; but it is not at all clear that the child sees himself as <u>having</u> such a reason. Haines' argument against internalism depends on the confusion between "having an obligation or reason" and "there being an obligation or reason. The argument is successful only if internalism is interpreted as the view that "there being an obligation or reason" entails motivation, but not if it is interpreted as the view that "having and obligation or reason" entails motivation. His argument does show that some conceptual clarification is required on what it means to "have an obligation."

Since Nagel's view of internalism does not have the effect of holding moral obligation "hostage" to personal desires and emotions, his version of internalism has

remained untouched. A final evaluation, then, of Haines's arguments against internalism, like Robertson's, must now await an evaluation of the various versions of the internalist/externalist distinction in the next chapter.

II

Thomas Wren, Christine Korsgaard, and Charlotte Brown are three contemporary moral philosophers who shift their focus away from Frankena's and towards Nagel's formulation of the internalist/externalist distinction. While Milo, Robertson and Haines all put forth attempts to refute a doctrine of internalism, among these writers only Korsgaard attempts to take sides on the issue, and even in her case, the defense of a version of internalism is not her primary focus. It is not too premature to suggest that this is because Nagel's formulation of internalism is more difficult to refute, or because, as Korsgaard says, "examples of unquestionably external[ist] theories are not easy to find."[16]

Wren, in his article "Metaethical Internalism: Can Moral Beliefs Motivate?" offers his own statement of the

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[16]Korsgaard, "Skepticism about Practical Reason, 9.

distinction as the following: "What is basic to the internalist-externalist distinction is the essentially metaethical idea that conceptions of morality can be differentiated according to whether or not they build a motivational component into the very meaning of a cognition's being a moral judgment."[17] He comments on the fact that internalism is the "dominant view" in contemporary philosophy, which appears odd in light of the attempts to refute internalism we have just reviewed. He mentions Falk as the originator of the distinction, though unfortunately, without mentioning that Falk refers to internalist and externalist senses of ought, and not to internalism or externalism as theories of moral motivation.

Wren cites both Frankena and Nagel as philosophers who make the distinction without pointing out that the two philosophers obviously hold differing ideas about how the distinction should be drawn, as is evidenced by the glaring fact that Frankena thinks of Kant as an externalist, and Nagel thinks of him as an internalist. The likely reason, however, is that Wren's formulation of the distinction combines, like the one we have labelled the "generic" definition, both Frankena's and Nagel's definitions, so that his formulation is sufficiently broad to apply to

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[17]Thomas E. Wren, "Metaethical Internalism: Can Moral Beliefs Motivate?" Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association (1985): 63.

both. For Frankena, the internalist claims that the motivational component is built into "the meaning of cognition's being a moral judgment" because moral judgments are determined by motives possessed by the agent. For Nagel, this is only one way motivation is built into moral judgment. He believes that moral judgment does not necessarily reflect motivation (tendencies) but that moral motivation is "tied to" or "guaranteed by" moral judgment. While examining Frankena's description of the internalist thesis as maintaining that there is a "logical entailment" between recognizing a moral obligation and having motivation with respect to it, Wren wisely notes the need to be more specific about what is meant by this "logical entailment," and he distinguishes between two types of internalism based on the kind of logical entailment involved. Now when Frankena speaks of the logical entailment between obligation and motivation, it seems clear that he is thinking of Stevenson.[18] As an emotivist, Stevenson believed that moral judgments are simply expressions of personal tendencies, and nothing more. Since there is nothing objective about moral judgments in his view, moral claims are just the sort of thing that express occurrent tendencies within the subject. Wren

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[18]While Frankena uses the phrase "logical entailment" in his introductory paragraph, it does not reoccur until his discussion of Stevenson (54).

classifies this type of logical entailment as falling under an expressive version of internalism. But logical entailment does not have to be restricted to analysis. It may be the case that the recognition of a moral obligation necessarily brings about motivation. Wren labels this a causal version of internalism. The causal version of internalism is adopted by rationalists, says Wren, notably Kant; whereas the expressive version is adopted by Hume and many nonrationalists. Wren considers these categories exhaustive of the views of the entailment relation currently under discussion.

Wren does not attempt to advance an argument to defend or refute either internalism (causal or expressive) or externalism. He says that he thinks of himself as an internalist, and mentions two reasons for rejecting externalism. The first is the same reason that Nagel gives: externalism is "unacceptable" because it allows a person who admits being bound by a moral obligation to ask why he should do it (PA, 9). The second is that Wren believes that externalism cannot account for the phenomenological facts of moral experience. He states: "Externalism undercuts the regard which moral agents typically have of themselves as autonomous actors."[19]

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[19]Wren, 73.

In this article, however, Wren's intention is to draw parallels between contemporary philosophical accounts of the relation between the recognition of moral obligation and motivation, and those of contemporary moral psychology, and to encourage interdisciplinary rapport. He observes that while most philosophers have tended to be internalists and most psychologists (behaviorists, neo-behaviorists, and social pyschologists) have tended to be externalists, the prospects of the two disciplines achieving what he calls "reflective equilibrium" are especially good due to the work in moral philosophy by R. M. Hare and the work done in moral psychology by Piaget and Kohlberg. Hare follows in the Kantian tradition which attributes to reason a motivational efficacy; and Kohlberg's empirical studies indicate that individuals capable of moral reasoning at higher stages are in fact more apt to resist temptation, peer pressure, and authoritative influence; that is, there is evidence of an empirical correlation between moral reasoning and people's conduct.[20] Such evidence, Wren notes, is essential in response to the externalist tendencies of social psychologists.

Kohlberg also distinguishes within moral cognition the "deontic judgment about moral rightness or justice" and "the responsibility judgment about personal requiredness."

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[20]Wren, 75.

To Wren this suggests that the "logical entailment" relationship between the recognition of moral obligation and the respective motivation must be examined more fully and a third interpretation developed beyond the expressive and the causal interpretation. Wren observes in cognitive developmental psychology a "shift of motivational weight from deontic propositions to aretaic ones," and encourages philosophers to follow suit. His point is that the motivation to act according to the dictates of morality follows not simply from the recognition of a moral obligation, but from "one's sense of self" or character: not simply from the desire to be moral, but from the desire to be virtuous. For Wren, the whole story on the relation of moral judgment and moral motivation has not yet been told.

Christine Korsgaard and Charlotte Brown also follow Nagel's distinction. I think it may be argued either that Korsgaard simply adopts Nagel's definitions, or that she offers a formulation which is more precise than Nagel's. At first, her review of the distinction makes it appear that she is adopting Nagel's definition without alteration. She states:

> An <u>internalist</u> theory is a theory according to which the knowledge (or the truth or the acceptance) of a moral judgment implies the existence of a motive (not necessarily overriding) for acting on that judgment...On an <u>externalist</u> theory, by contrast, such a conjunction of moral comprehension and total

> unmotivatedness is perfectly possible: knowledge is one thing and motivation is another.[21]

This certainly seems to parallel Nagel's idea of motivation being tied to or guaranteed by the recognition of moral truths.

However, in her discussion of examples of externalism, she seems to go beyond Nagel and specify more clearly how motivation is guaranteed by moral cognition. While admitting that examples of externalism are difficult to identify, she argues, like Nagel, but more thoroughly, that Mill is an externalist. Mill, she says, is an externalist because for him the "'ultimate sanction' of the principle of utility is <u>not</u> that it can be proved, but that it is in accordance with our natural social feelings," and more clearly, because for him the reason why the act is right is not the reason why we do it. The reasons why we act morally, the motives, are induced by a social upbringing and education.[22] But the internalist, Korsgaard says, holds that "the reason why the act is right is the reason,

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[21]Korsgaard, 8-9.

[22]I still believe that the classification of Mill as an externalist, even with this more specific statement of the internalist/externalist distinction, is questionable. As I hinted at in the chapter one, Mill says that the ultimate sanction is sympathy. Just because he talks about the importance of a utilitarian upbringing does not mean that he is an externalist. Kant also stressed the importance of moral education, but Nagel, Korsgaard and Brown label him an internalist. As I will argue more forcefully in the next chapter, I believe that for Mill sympathy is both the reason, and the motive, for acting morally.

and the motive, for doing it: it is a practical reason."[23]

Another example of an externalist theory, for Korsgaard is intuitionism. Intuitionists, like Ross and Prichard, hold that morality is discovered by intuition, but that the intuition that something is moral triggers the desire to do what is right. Since the relationship between moral apprehension and moral motivation is one of "triggering" it is possible for the apprehension to occur without the motivation. By contrast, for the internalist, since the reason why something is right is also the motive for doing it, it is not possible for apprehension to occur without motivation.[24]

Now all Nagel says is that motivation must be "tied to" or "guaranteed by" the truth or meaning of ethical judgments; but he doesn't say how the motivation is guaranteed or tied. On the other hand, the more detailed formulation of the distinction Korsgaard develops in her discussion of externalists would designate as internalist all the examples of internalism provided by Nagel, the moral theories of Hobbes, Hume and Kant. For each of these thinkers, the reason why something is right is also the motive. Hobbes says that our ethical obligations are

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[23]Korsgaard, 10.

[24]Korsgaard speaks of the triggering relationship described by the intuitionists (8) and Brown discusses it in more detail in a footnote (74).

simply consequences of what we already are motivated to do; self-interest determines what is ethically required, and it also provides the motivation to act accordingly. Hume says that our passions of sympathy or benevolence both determine what is morally required and also provide the motivation for ethical activity. For Kant, reason determines what is right and it acts as a motive. Whereas for both Hobbes and for Hume psychological motivation is prior to ethical principles, for Kant it is a consequence of the rational recognition of ethical principles; but for all, the reason why the act is right is the motive for doing it. So we have here a more specific account of internalism than Nagel's, but one that seems completely consistent with his own examples, and therefore, one that he might readily adopt.

In her article Korsgaard claims that arguments to the effect that reason lacks motivational power (a Humean view) are based on arguments to the effect that the content of reason is not morally informative. As she puts it, Hume's "motivational skepticism" about reason is based on his "content skepticism" about reason.[25] Although she criticizes this Humean view of reason, she clearly supports the internalist thesis as she has described it. She, along with Nagel, maintains that any view that permits the

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[25]Korsgaard, 7.

possibility of asking why we should do something after recognizing that it is morally required is unsatisfactory. One of Korsgaard's chief points is that human failures to be motivated by moral reasons do not weaken the internalist case. The reason is that when people act in such a way, they are not acting rationally. Hume believed that people are irrational only when they make false judgments of existence, or when they draw insufficient means-ends inferences. But, Korsgaard argues, there is another way we think people act irrationally: by perceiving a means-end relationship, and then failing to act in light of it. In fact, Korsgaard points out, this is a more genuine form of irrationality than the cases pointed out by Hume, for if a person has false beliefs about existence or means-ends relationships, then his or her actions are not truly irrational. She says Hume in fact seems to hold that people never really act in truly irrational ways.

Korsgaard holds that persons who fail to act on their perceptions of means/ends relationships are <u>practically irrational</u>, and that when we do not act morally once we recognize what is morally required, we are morally <u>irrational</u>. Now Korsgaard maintains that, although we know we can act this way, we nevertheless recognize as an ideal the practically rational person--the person who is motivated according to his or her moral perceptions. That is, we subscribe to what she calls the "internalist

requirement" which is that "practical-reason claims, if they are really to present us with reasons for action, must be capable of motivating rational persons."[26] The fact that we consider it irrational not to heed our judgments about what we ought to do supports, rather than weakens, internalism (of a Kantian, not a Humean variety).

Brown clearly adopts Korsgaard's interpretation of the distinction between internalism and externalism as having to do with whether or not the reason why something is judged to be morally required is also the reason it is a motivating factor.[27] The thesis of her article is that there is an inconsistency between Hume's "destructive phase" and his "constructive phase." In his "destructive phase," she argues, Hume attempts to undermine the idea that reason has motivational power, and support the idea that only passions motivate. He commits himself to an internalist thesis that passions of moral sentiment both determine what is right or wrong and provide motivational power. But in his "constructive phase" he argues that pride and the desire to be happy (self-interest) are the real motivating powers, even though they are not the basis of moral rectitude. Both this argument and Korsgaard's

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[26]Korsgaard, 11.

[27]Brown, 74.

arguments about Hume will be examined in the fifth chapter which is devoted to Hume's moral theory. The point here is to note that Brown employs an interpretation of the internalist/externalist distinction that follows Korsgaard's within the Nagelian tradition.

A review of current philosophical literature on the internalist/externalist distinction has revealed that the transition from the already muddled historical origins has muddled on. Frankena's understanding of the distinction has not been uniformly interpreted; and no attempt to reconcile the differences between Nagel and Frankena has been made. Wren has noted the need for more careful accounts of Frankena's entailment relation. Korsgaard has found a way to make Nagel's formulation more precise. But the criticisms of and arguments for internalism and the criticisms of and arguments for externalism have all assumed prematurely that internalism and externalism have been adequately defined.

In surveying this literature we have shown that the various definitions of internalism and externalism are not all coextensive. So the task at hand is to clearly distinguish various formulations of the distinctions, and then to determine which, if any, of the formulations is of significant philosophical interest. A philosophically interesting formulation is first, one which offers a convincing and acceptable theory of moral motivation.

Secondly, a formulation is philosophically interesting if the distinction is useful in categorizing traditional moral theories and in evaluating contemporary ethical works. Focusing our attention on one such formulation of the internalist/externalist distinction is the task of Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

EVALUATION OF THE VARIOUS DISTINCTIONS

Although Falk did not himself offer a theory of internalism or externalism as a theory of moral motivation, I would like to begin this chapter by noting that he offers a possibility that perhaps is insightful and should not be overlooked by those who do. Falk distinguishes between the internal and the external sense of ought: I can feel obliged to do something either as a result of some external power or authority, or I can feel obliged to do something on the basis of my own convictions or the dictates of my own conscience. Certainly, one does not have to be very advanced in moral development, or educated in moral philosophy, to recognize both experiences. So no theory of moral motivation that excludes this primitive awareness can be a significant theory of moral motivation. While there may be something distinctive that separates internalism and externalism, either theory of moral motivation must make

room for the fact that we experience both internal and external sources of moral motivation.

The problems and contradictions that have been noted in the literature to date on the distinction between internalism and externalism as theories of moral motivation might, it has been suggested, just be a result of imprecision and ambiguity in the formulations offered. Without making the Wittgensteinian claim that the whole issue can be resolved through a linguistic analysis, that all these philosophical puzzles can be dissolved through semantic clarification, it still seems obvious that there is a great need for clarification of key terms here. The most obvious example of this need concerns the term "motivation" itself. Frankena uses the word to mean inclination or tendency based on emotion, desire, feeling or self-interest, Falk and Nagel obviously use it in a wider sense to mean any force or tendency that moves one to action.

But this is only the most obvious example of multiple meanings of terms in this tradition. In fact, someone could easily review this literature and conclude that he or she had achieved no real grasp of what the terms "internalism" or "externalism" mean in the first place. We may have the experience that what we thought we understood upon first acquaintance with the distinction, in fact we

really don't understand at all. In this chapter each of the attempts to formulate a distinction between internalism and externalism will be examined again in an attempt to establish clarity and precision where it has hitherto been lacking. Then we can evaluate that particular version of the distinction in terms of its usefulness and philosophical interest. I will argue that the philosophical question of the greatest interest in all these versions of the distinction identified so far is the question of the motivational efficacy of reason, which Nagel represents as the choice between rational and anti-rational internalism.

Frankena. What really does Frankena mean when he says that motivation, which is already ambiguous as he uses the term, is either "internal" or "external" to obligation? Is the spatial metaphor that he uses here all that illuminating? Frankena later substitutes another spatial metaphor for this original one: motivation is or is not "built into" moral judgment. Do we understand what this "built into" relationship refers to or implies? If all it means for motivation to be built into moral judgment is that it is "part of the analysis" of moral judgment, such that something is not a moral judgment unless it entails the proposition that the one judging is also motivated

accordingly, then what philosopher or ethical position adheres to the internalist claim? When we realize, by the end of Frankena's article, that the claim that motivation is "built into" moral judgment means that it is not "logically possible" either to see or to have a moral obligation without having a corresponding motivation, we realize that the internalist is none other than the emotivist, because only one's own feelings and tendencies count as motivations for Frankena, as already noted.[1] Remember, however, that Frankena's version of internalism is not that believing, or assenting, or saying that one has a moral obligation entails moral motivation, but that having an obligation entails moral motivation. So he can believe externalism is correct as long as he denies that having a moral obligation entails having motivation in the form of personal desires. That is, Frankena's version of internalism is essentially a rejection of moral realism.[2]

Externalism, for Frankena, encompasses intuitionism, cultural and theological relativism, utilitarianism, and deontological ethical systems--any moral theory which allows for some degree of objectivity.[3] If the internalists are those who deny moral realism, that is, who

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[1]Frankena, 73.

[2]See Chapter 1, 34-39.

[3]See Frankena, 43.

deny that there are objective moral truths, and who assert that moral judgments gua moral judgments are reflections of personal feelings or inclinations, then it appears that the debate between internalism and externalism is antiquated. Introductory ethics textbooks abound with arguments against this sort of subjectivism, and moral developmental psychologists suggest that it is but a manifestation of a primitive level of moral consciousness. Emotivism is no longer seriously defended in philosophical circles, and was not ever seriously defended in non-philosophical circles. As one puts emotivism in its place in the history of philosophy, it appears to have been but an unfortunate implication of logical positivism. So, for the purposes of this study, I will simply "let the dead horse lie."

According to Frankena's own analysis, most philosophers have been externalists, meaning that they have not reduced moral judgments to expressions of personal feelings. Nevertheless, for Frankena emotivism presented a significant challenge. What was it that bothered Frankena, who was so intuitively committed to objectivity in ethics, so much that he was led to express doubt that his natural proclivity to externalism could be trusted? The answer appears to be that he could not himself respond to the objection raised by the "internalists" of his time, namely that the externalists, those who hold that morality is

objective, could not explain the connection between morality and motivation. Frankena considered it a weakness of externalism that it seemed to allow "a gap between perceived obligation and motivation."[4] This is a weakness because, from our common sense perspective, we all expect there to be a close connection between moral awareness and motivation: we expect people to be influenced or affected by the recognition of moral obligations.

Frankena accepts without question that this is a weakness of externalism and claims that the choice between internalism and externalism then has to be made in view of each theory's relative strengths and weaknesses. To him, the motivational gap in externalism is ineluctable. However, the gap disappears if the concept of motivation is not restricted to subjective concerns. If it is allowed that we are not moved to action simply by our present set of emotions and inclinations, but that we can be moved to action by a variety of movers, including the awareness of an objectively binding moral obligation, then externalism does not suffer from this weakness. On the whole, then, Frankena's formulation of the distinction between internalism and externalism is of limited philosophical interest, not only because it considers emotivism a serious moral theory, but because is serves to distinguish only

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[4]Ibid., 78.

emotivism from all other moral theories. It is also of limited philosophical interest because Frankena gives no argument to show that there is a mysterious gap between the awareness of moral obligation and the power to act accordingly, independent of private concerns. Further, a philosophically interesting distinction could never be one which had as a central concept, a concept so unclear as the concept of motivation is for Frankena.

Milo. We have seen that while Haines and Robertson give formulations of the distinction between internalism and externalism which are, at least when applied to the moral sphere, functionally equivalent to that given by Frankena (overlooking for now any difference of meaning carried by an expression they use, "having a reason to act"), Milo does not.[5] Milo defines internalism as the view that believing or judging that something is a moral obligation or is morally prohibited entails having a corresponding positive or negative attitude toward doing it. In logical notation, for Frankena internalism is the thesis that $H \supset M$, for Milo internalism is the thesis that $B \supset M$. (H = having a moral obligation, B = believing one has a moral obligation, M = having motivation, or a pro- or con-attitude.) Milo's version of internalism allows for the

[5]See Chapter 2, 52-60.

possibility that there are objective moral truths independent of personal beliefs.

Milo's version of internalism actually applies to moral obligation and its relation to psychological characteristics of belief. For, we might tend to think that having a belief entails having a corresponding attitude or inclination. Thus, if I believe it will rain this afternoon, and I believe getting rained on is uncomfortable, then I will be inclined to bring an umbrella for protection. If I believe a test will be difficult and I believe that doing well on it is important, then I will be inclined to study hard for it. Thus we normally think our beliefs have a motivating influence on our actions. But Milo gives instances where holding a belief is not necessarily associated with corresponding attitudes, and may fail to be motivating at all.

Thus he argues that it is perfectly possible to hold a belief and not be motivated by it. We can accept, on the authority of our culture, or our church, or our parent, or our ethics professor, that a moral belief is correct, without having any concomitant dispositions to act. In fact, Milo says, a belief can even be the result of a genuine evaluation, and still be accompanied by indifference on the motivational side; and his examples are very convincing. Just as I can make a genuine evaluation

of a wine using an accepted standard, without myself having a corresponding attitude toward that wine, so I can judge an action to be wrong or right from an accepted moral normative guide without the corresponding motivation. Thus I could master even sophisticated utilitarian methods of determining what is morally required, or some other theory of morality, and nevertheless be personally unmoved by them.

There seems to be no doubt that if internalism is to be identified with the theory that any and every moral belief entails a concomitant motivation or attitude, then internalism is a theory that is easily refuted. Milo's examples make this clear. We need not dismiss the theory only on the basis of isolated or idiosyncratic examples of moral indifferentists. We can also dismiss it on the basis of the common experience we have of being totally unmotivated towards a duty that is simply externally imposed, rather than conscientiously and authentically undertaken or accepted. Thus, I think we can conclude that while Milo's argument is convincing, his formulation of the distinction between internalism and externalism is of rather limited philosophical interest.

Nagel. Nagel defines internalism as the view that moral motivation is "tied to the truth or meaning of ethical

statements," and externalism as the denial of this view. When it is thought that motivation is tied to the meaning of a ethical statement, rather than to its truth, then the resulting internalism is of a philosophically weaker sort, and Nagel clearly has emotivism in mind here. In the stronger version of internalism, moral motivation is tied, not just to the meaning, but to the recognition of the truth of an ethical proposition (PA, 8). Nagel further distinguishes between a rational and an anti-rational version of internalism, in light of the debate in moral philosophy between those who hold that reason is capable of providing motivation and those who do not.

But, the term "recognize" is broad enough to include "believe" or "judge." If I believe that birth control is considered immoral within the teachings of my religion, I can be said to "recognize" that birth control is wrong. If I judge something to be morally correct on the basis of a utilitarian calculation, I can be said to "recognize" that it is correct. But in either case I may fail to have an associated disposition. Unless the term "recognition" is further clarified or specified, Nagel's internalism appears to be rather easily undone by arguments like Milo's.

Nagel would likely respond by suggesting that, although it is possible for one to believe a moral proposition, or judge it to be true, without having an

associated disposition to act accordingly, it is not possible to <u>really believe</u> or <u>really judge</u> that something has a positive or negative moral quality and not have the associated disposition. By "really" believe or judge, I mean to arrive at a belief or a judgment on one's own. The mere acceptance of a belief or of the principle through which one arrives at a belief understandably has a less powerful effect, or perhaps no effect at all, than does the arrival at a belief through an authentic process. In comparison to beliefs that result from the process of personal reflection (authentic beliefs) such beliefs are deficient. Authentic beliefs, by their nature, have motivational content; beliefs which are merely accepted do not. The Nagelian internalist, in making this kind of distinction, is able to sidestep Milo's argument. The internalist could argue that the sorts of beliefs that Milo recounts amount to "external" reasons for action, and that when people act according to those beliefs, they are acting in light of the external sense of "ought." The internalist's concern, they would say, is to point to the continuity between <u>genuine</u> moral realizations and moral dispositions. Now some philosophers have objected to this version of internalism by claiming that not all moral indifference can be explained away simply by making a distinction between "really" believing or judging vs.

merely applying a belief as a standard. This objection to Nagelian internalism, based on the possibility of moral indifference, will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Now we must now ask whether or not the distinction between internalism and externalism as formulated by Nagel is philosophically interesting, once the just mentioned clarification is made in Nagel's account, so that the focus is on genuine recognition, real belief, authentic judgment. In the first chapter, it was proposed that Nagel's examples of externalists in the history of philosophy were problematic. In the case of Moore it was claimed, Nagel's explanation lacks sufficient clarity; and in the case of Mill, Nagel's analysis was said to be unconvincing. Who else, then of the major figures in the history of moral philosophy, is a Nagelian externalist? Who holds that the authentic recognition of a moral truth does not provide moral motivation? Nagel tells us that it is certainly not Plato, or Aristotle, or Hobbes, or Kant, or Hume, or the emotivists. All of these hold that the recognition of a moral obligation, if properly attended to, and in the absence of overpowering counter-instincts, is naturally associated with a motivation to fulfill the obligation. If Nagel proves incapable of providing a convincing example of externalism, we are naturally led to

wonder whether the distinction between internalism and externalism is of any philosophical significance. For the usefulness of the distinction depends in part on whether or not the distinction can be used to classify moral theories. In fact, Nagel's own interest shifts from the debate between internalism and externalism to the debate between rational and anti-rational internalism.

Before we follow him in the same direction, we should return to the points made in the first chapter to consider carefully whether Moore and Mill are examples of Nagel's externalism, and in the course of this determine more precisely just what externalism is. Unfortunately, looking at Moore, Nagel's first example of an externalist, will not help us. First of all, Moore never directly discusses the problem of moral motivation. Secondly, Nagel is extremely vague in his explanation of why he considers Moore an externalist. Finally, Nagel comments that Moore's argument against naturalism betrays an "unrecognized assumption of internalism;" so even Nagel seems to be confused about the proper classification of Moore (PA, 8). Therefore the whole case falls on Nagel's analysis of Mill as an externalist.

Nagel argues that Mill is an externalist because Mill regards "the question [of the sanctions of the principle of utility as] separate from that of the principle's truth,

and the answers he provides are unrelated to his arguments for the principle" (PA, 8). I assume that Nagel is saying that if the sanctions for the principle of utility are not related to the proof of the principle, then moral motivation would not be guaranteed by the recognition of the truth of a moral obligation, hence Mill is not an internalist. Korsgaard, analyzing Mill along similar lines, calls attention to Mill's statement that the motives for acting according to the utilitarian principle, rather than their being an automatic outcome of the rational application of the principle of utility, must be "acquired in a utilitarian upbringing."[6] Since the guarantee of moral belief yielding motivation exists only in moral theories according to which the reason why something is right is itself the reason why we do it, this argument holds, Mill must be an externalist. Let us see, then, if Mill's discussion of sanctions really does leave them "unrelated" to the truth of the principle of utility.

It is certainly true that Mill devotes separate chapters of his Utilitarianism to the "proof" of the principle of utility and to the question of its sanctions. Since the questions of how we know that something is right or wrong and of why we do what we think is morally obligatory are pervasive questions in the history of

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[6]Korsgaard, 9.

ethics, the philosopher is led to pose both questions, and it is not unnatural for Mill to devote separate sections of his work to each. But the important question is whether the answer Mill gives to the question, "Why should I do what I ought to do?" is really unrelated to the his answer to the question "how do I know what is morally required"? So we must look at his answers to each question.

In answer to the question "Why be moral?" Mill distinguishes between two kinds of sanctions, external and internal (used in Falk's sense) for the principle of utility. External sanctions are "hope of favor and the fear of displeasure" from other human beings, or from God. Such external sanctions are the grounds for what Falk has called the external sources of "ought." There is no doubt that Mill thought of these external sanctions as extremely powerful forces in molding our moral natures. The principle of utility, like any other moral or social principle, has a binding force because we all naturally desire reward and fear punishment. Korsgaard, in supporting her classification of Mill as an externalist, directs our attention to the passage where Mill even says that our moral faculty is "susceptible, by a sufficient use of the external sanctions and of the force of early impressions, of being cultivated in almost any direction, so that there is hardly anything so absurd or so

mischievous that it may not...be made to act on the human mind with all the authority of conscience."[7]

Nevertheless, Mill puts his emphasis on the internal sanction, calling it in fact the "ultimate sanction" of morality. This internal sanction is "the conscientious feelings of mankind."[8] Mill says that most human beings possess these moral feelings which incline them, even in the absence of all possibilities of rewards or punishments, to do that which enhances the happiness of those around them--that which encourages harmony between the self and others. He does admit that there are people "whose mind is a moral blank" and who simply do not possess the moral feelings which are the ground of conscience, and that there are others in whom the moral feelings are so inadequately developed as to even permit the possibility of the question "Need I obey my conscience?" For these, the only hope of assuring moral behavior is through the establishment of effective external sanctions.[9]

Now it is possible that these comments provide textual evidence that Mill does not think that motivation is <u>necessarily</u> tied to, or guaranteed by, the recognition of the truth of a moral proposition. Moral feelings,

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[7]Mill, 39.

[8]Mill, 37.

[9]Mill, 38-43.

including the internal sanction, he claims, are not innate and are ordinarily in need of cultivation. Yet, on the other hand, Mill describes our moral feelings as being so natural that they are capable of "springing up spontaneously" and are "susceptible of being brought by cultivation to a high degree of development."[10] But if he concedes that there are some who lack even minimal internal moral motivation, could he not consistently hold, given what he has already said, that such persons are not capable of a real, genuine, authentic moral judgment or belief, which is why only external sanctions will affect their behavior? That is, if we can allow Nagel this clarification, then we should allow it to Mill as well. For the rest of us, however, Mill holds that the sheer confrontation with the moral fact inclines us toward moral behavior. So we naturally think of ourselves as "members of a body" and thus we naturally identify our feelings with the good of others. We are caught up in a "contagion of sympathy."[11]

After looking at all the relevant passages, including those in which Mill describes the "ultimate" internal sanction, it seems both inaccurate and unfair to proclaim that Mill is an externalist. The strongest argument for

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[10]Mill, 39.

[11]Mill, 41.

his being an externalist is that he denies that moral motivation is guaranteed in all cases. He concedes that there are those whose minds are "moral blanks" or who lack even the most rudimentary moral cultivation so that moral motivation is not attendant on moral recognition, if the latter is possible at all. Mill's view, that is, is that normally moral motivation is attendant on moral awareness, presuming at least minimal moral cultivation, so that only in adverse cultural or emotional conditions is it lacking. But then Mill is an externalist only if externalism is understood as no more than the view that there do exist individuals for whom motivation is not tied to minimal forms of moral awareness. If this is externalism, then it is a moral theory designed to accommodate the existence only of the morally retarded, and it is profoundly limited in its philosophical interest.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that others in the history of philosophy classified by Nagel as internalists recognize that there are individuals in whom the awareness of moral obligation appears to fail to motivate. Plato has Thrasymachus to contend with, and Aristotle, in his classification of the types of moral character, does not feel he has exhausted those deprived of virtue with the incontinent or the intemperate, but makes room for those totally incapable of virtue--the "bestial"--

as well. Both of these Greek philosophers put a tremendous emphasis on the importance of a virtuous state, believing that citizens in general are only as moral as their political systems. Even Kant, Nagel's paradigmatic rational internalist, recognized that moral natures must be developed through a proper education.[12] If admitting the possibility of the morally retarded is tantamount to the acceptance of externalism, then not only Mill, but Plato, Aristotle, and Kant are all externalists. If this is what is meant, then externalism, as a theory, is rendered trivial.

Now let us address the question in the other direction. What is the relation between Mill's proof for the principle of utility and what he says about its sanctions. Is it really "totally unrelated"?

Mill says that his demonstration of the principle of utility is not a "proof" in a formal, deductive sense, since it is not the sort of truth that admits of deductive proofs, being concerned with ultimate ends. Nevertheless, he explains, his demonstration is a "proof" in an informal

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[12]See Metaphysical Principles of Virtue, Part Two of the Metaphysics of Morals, Part II, First Section, "The Didactics of Ethics.; "Lecture-Notes on Pedagogy," especially the Introduction and section entitled "Moral Education." Also, in the Critique of Judgment Kant states: "In fact, without development of moral ideas, that which we, prepared by culture, call sublime, presents itself to the uneducated man merely as terrible." trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1951), 105.

sense, in that its presentation has the power of winning the assent of those who are exposed to it. He states: "The subject is within the cognizance of the rational faculty...considerations may be presented capable of determining the intellect either to give or withhold its assent to the doctrine; and this is equivalent to proof."[13]

The considerations he presents to convince us of the principle of utility are the following: 1) The sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it. 2) Each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. 3) Happiness is a good: each person's happiness is a good to that person and the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons. 4) Human nature desires nothing except insofar as it contributes to happiness: nothing is a good to each person except insofar as it contributes to his or her own happiness and nothing is a good to the aggregate of all persons except insofar as it contributes to the good of the whole. 5) Thus, the general happiness is the sole end of human action.

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[13]Mill, 7.

Our task here is not to evaluate the logic of the argument, but only to determine whether or not the discussion of sanctions is totally unrelated to it.[14] Now if Mill had concentrated his attention only on the external sanctions for morality, we could agree that the answer to the question of sanctions is unrelated to the proof of the correctness of the principle of utility. But he didn't. Instead, the larger part of the discussion on sanctions is devoted to the internal sanction in which the operative principle is our natural social feelings and our capacity for sympathy. But this is also at the core of his "proof." For, were it not for this factor, Mill could not have claimed assent for the view that the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of persons and the sole end of human action. The two conceptions are thus intimately related. Indeed, we could justifiably say that for Mill, the reason why something is right is also the motive for doing it.

These arguments suffice to show that Nagel has given no clear example of externalism among moral philosophers. They also show that he has given no clear definition of externalism--other than the trivial one mentioned above--

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[14]For a careful examination of the cogency of Mill's "proof" see Henry R West, "Mill's 'Proof' of Utility," in The Limits of Utilitarianism, eds., Harlan B. Miller and William H. Williams, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 23-34.

since even those philosophers classified as internalists do not believe that moral motivation is always tied to the recognition of moral truths. Furthermore, since we have uncovered the fuzziness of externalism, we must also realize that we really have no clear idea of what the opposite of externalism, namely internalism really is. If a distinction is going to be philosophically interesting, the first criterion it must meet is clarity in the distinction itself.

Summary. Reviewing the entire relevant literature on the internalist/externalist distinctions we can see that quite a variety of terms have been used to characterize the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation. The following chart indicates the most important expressions that have been used:

having			
believing one has			
saying one has		is tied to	
seeing one has		guarantees	feeling
judging one has		reflects	subjective motive
perceiving	a moral	implies	moral motives
acknowledging	obligation	causes	pro attitudes
assenting to		builds in	a motive to act
recognizing			a reason to act
experiencing			
thinking one has			
having a reason for			

Obviously we receive little direction in drawing a clear and significant distinction from a listing of so many and such ill-defined terms as those presented in this body of literature. In search of clarity, I will now recast the distinction as formulated by Frankena, Milo, and Nagel.

1) Frankena's formulation of the distinction, stated most clearly, is the following:

Internalism is the thesis that having a moral obligation implies the existence of motivation, in the form of a personal desire or inclination, in the moral agent to

fulfill that obligation; externalism is the denial of that thesis.

Comment:

The distinction is reasonably precise, and to that extent, helpful. It is possible to identify both internalists and externalists, though most ethicians have been externalists. If emotivism is considered a philosophically viable theory, the distinction between internalism and externalism is an interesting one. The current attitude toward emotivism, I believe, is that it can safely be ignored, having only occurred as an oddity in the history of philosophical ethics. Anyone who believes that moral obligation is an objective matter, that is, any moral realist, easily accepts the doctrine of externalism.

2) Milo's formulation of the distinction, stated most clearly, is the following:

Internalism is the thesis that any belief or judgment that one has a moral obligation implies the existence of at least some motivation to fulfill that obligation; externalism is the denial of that thesis.

Comment:

The distinction is also reasonably precise, and to this extent helpful. It is not at all what Frankena has in

mind, contrary to Milo's interpretation of him. The distinction is helpful in that it contributes to the clarification of the phenomenon of belief and its relation to motivational attitudes. Milo rightfully points out that not all instances of belief or judgment are accompanied by attitudinal frames of mind. However, I believe the distinction as such lacks any significant degree of philosophical interest. Once the distinction is explained, the natural response is to opt for externalism. Any honest observer of moral behavior will admit the possibility of applying unheld standards and of making inauthentic, but nevertheless logical, evaluative judgements, without thereby possessing associated attitudes. The formulation is of philosophical interest only insofar as it forces us to recognize and admit the complexities of the nature of belief. But beyond that, contrasts of internalism and externalism in Milo's sense are not particularly useful.

3) Nagel's original formulation, as found in the opening pages of The Possibility of Altruism, is vague. However, if all the information Nagel gives is taken up and fully expressed, I believe his definition of the distinction can be stated as follows:

Internalism is the thesis that authentically and genuinely perceiving, judging, or believing that one has a moral obligation entails either motivation in the form of personal desire or inclination within the moral agent, or purely moral motivation, and externalism is the thesis that denies it.

Comment:

This formulation is reasonably precise, at least if we understand moral motivation to be motivation to act morally that is based on nothing other than the recognition that something is moral. On this formulation of the distinction, internalism is an extremely attractive thesis, in that it captures the bare minimum of what we expect from moral consciousness: that moral consciousness is something which affects behavior by being in itself a basis for action. From Aristotle to Iris Murdoch ethicians have recognized two goals. Moral philosophy should be both realistic in its description of our moral natures and idealistic in that it should offer us a moral ideal.[15] Moral consciousness is the basis of this twofold purpose: it is in its essence responsive to the ideal human nature. An ethical system which neglected this essential nature would be unsatisfying. Thus Nagel says of externalist

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[15]See Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts, Leslie Stephen Lecture, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

theories that they are simply unacceptable because they permit someone who already recognizes a moral obligation to demand a further justification (PA, 9). The fact that the moral obligation is reflective of the ideal is reason enough for it to be fulfilled. But the requirement on a moral theory is so basic and obvious that the distinction between internalism and externalism makes us doubt its philosophical significance. One is tempted to simply label externalism as jejune.

Nagel has given such a broad definition of internalism that it encompasses all major moral theories, even as diverse as Kant's theory is from Hobbes', or as emotivism is from naturalism. It is not at all surprising that Nagel turns his own attention away from the debate (if there is any) between internalism and externalism, and towards a more interesting one between rational and anti-rational internalism.

Similarly, if we look back again to Frankena's paper, the really interesting question is one that he fails to ask. Instead of just assuming that the awareness of a moral obligation is only motivating in terms of some occurrent desire or inclination, he should have challenged this by asking if something other than a desire or inclination, e.g. a moral judgment, can motivate. Given his own intuition that moral obligations are objective and

are independent of our desires, and given that moral obligation is by its very nature something we ought to fulfill, it would have been natural for him to do so.

This, indeed, is the fascinating question that has occupied much of the history of moral philosophy. It is this question that finds its culmination in the opposing views attributed to Hume and Kant. Hume is described as the champion of all those who have seen moral motivation only in our passions and desires; Kant is described as the champion of all those who see in our rational faculty itself a motivational power. On the other hand, while Hume sees our moral natures as necessarily continuous with our passionate natures, Kant sees it as radically discontinuous, capable of being expressed appropriately only through categorical, rather than hypothetical imperatives.

In the same vein, Korsgaard speaks of the "internalist requirement" of accounts of practical reasons: "Practical-reason claims, if they are really to present us with reasons for action, must be capable of motivating rational persons."[16] The issue that Nagel finally focuses on, the difference between rational and antirational version of (his version of) internalism is here articulated by Korsgaard in terms of her "internalist requirement" of

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[16]Korsgaard, 11.

practical reason. Hume is the target in opposition to whom Nagel's "rational internalism" should be defended. Hume's denial of the practical efficacy of reason must be challenged.

Given the problems and triviality of the formulations evaluated above, there seems to be no good reason to use the terms in any of those ways. We could then just throw the "internal/external" terminology out altogether. But a crucial issue is still with us, to which the terminology of "internal" and "external" aptly applies. Consequently, it does seem that if "internalism" and "externalism" are terms to be used in dealing with the problem of moral motivation, an extremely interesting philosophical distinction is this one, suggested by Korsgaard:

Rational Internalism is the theory that reason is capable, unaided by self-interest or personal desire, of moral motivation; externalism is the theory that reason lacks such motivational power.

It is to this question that the remainder of this work shall be dedicated. In the next chapter we will see how a Rational Internalist would respond to various common objections to Rational Internalism. The chapter following that will examine Hume's rejection of the internalist

requirement on practical reason, this being the most formidable objection to Rational Internalism that the history of Western moral philosophy offers.

Now that the various formulations of the distinction between internalism and externalism have been identified and clarified, we can see how the contradictions in the classifications of traditional moral theories by these contributors are explained. Frankena's classification of Kant as an externalist is not at all surprising, as Korsgaard claims, given his understanding of what internalism really is. It is natural for Nagel to think of Hume as an internalist given his broad understanding of internalism, and natural for Korsgaard to think of him as a violator of the internalist requirement and hence as an externalist. Frankena thinks of Aristotle as an externalist because of the latter's belief that obligation is present regardless of whatever personal desires may be represent, and Nagel and Korsgaard think of him has an internalist because of his belief in the motivational capacity of reason as evidenced in his notion of the practically wise person. Frankena believes that intuitionism is an obvious example of externalism, because of his identification of externalism as the view that morality is objective; and Korsgaard describes intuitionism as "almost" internalism because it is the rational

intuition of moral obligation that triggers the desire to act morally. It is no wonder that Frankena thinks of externalism as the more popular theory, whereas Wren claims that most philosophers have been internalists.

By recasting the use of these terms, following Korsgaard's suggestion and building on Nagel's rational/anti-rationalist distinction, this study will try to apply the insights of all these thinkers to one of the central questions of moral philosophy, namely the role of reason in moral motivation.

CHAPTER IV

RATIONAL INTERNALISM
AND
COMMON REFUTATIONS OF INTERNALISM

Various objections that have been raised to the several versions of internalism are relevant to Rational Internalism, the version of internalism which is, I have argued, of the most significant philosophical interest. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these objections in order to see if or to what extent these objections are problems for Rational Internalism. Following Nagel, I take Rational Internalism to be the view that reason can guarantee (some degree of) motivation to be moral. The motivation that reason provides is a purely moral one, that is, the motive or reason for acting morally is nothing other than that an obligation is recognized. According to Rational Internalism, reason has the <u>power</u> to bring about moral action. I will argue that Rational Internalism can be defended against all of the relevant objections to various forms of internalism. In the first section of this

chapter I will show that many objections against internalism really apply only to other, less interesting, versions of internalism, but not to Rational Internalism. In the second section I will deal with the more serious problem of amoralism or moral indifferentism, and will determine if and to what extent it poses a difficulty for Rational Internalism. In the third section, I will examine an objection by William Prior raised specifically against the view here called Rational Internalism, namely that Rational Internalism is an inadequate moral theory because it gives a distorted account of our moral lives by ignoring the motivating power of compassion. Finally, there will remain the objection to Rational Internalism that it is false because reason has no motivating power. This, of course, is the objection raised by David Hume; it is probably the most formidable objection to Rational Internalism. Its examination requires a thorough analysis of David Hume's theory of morality, and for this reason, I choose to devote the entire subsequent chapter to this objection.

A. Objections which apply only to other versions of internalism

There are two objections which fall under this category, and each can be dealt with very briefly in light

of the fact that we have already demonstrated that some versions of internalism are easily refutable.

The first objection is the following: Internalism is obviously false because we know that human beings are acratic, that is, they exhibit moral weakness. Sometimes we know what is right and we nevertheless do otherwise. Therefore, the recognition of a moral obligation does not entail the motivation to act accordingly. This objection has already been discussed in a preliminary way in the examination of Mill's views in Chapter Three.

This objection arises as a result of an exaggerated interpretation of the claim that "moral judgment entails motivation." If we interpret this to mean that, whenever we judge something to be morally required, we fulfil that obligation, or whenever we judge something to be immoral we refrain from doing it, internalism would clearly be false. For such a doctrine is obviously contrary to the facts of human experience, and on these grounds is easily rejected. Any realistic moral theory must account for the phenomenon of doing otherwise than we judge we ought, most often understood as the consequence of acrasia or moral weakness.

Now some thinkers claim that this phenomenon never occurs, that whatever a person does is what he or she judges ought to be done, so all wrongdoing is simply bad judgment. But for present purposes this study will accept the common sense evidence that the phenomenon is real.

Recall, now, the passage quoted earlier, for instance, where Frankena explains his preference for externalism over internalism by pointing out that it is possible to claim that one ought to do something and yet refrain from resolving to do it.[1] Frankena is assuming here a version of internalism that excludes the acratic phenomenon. But the Rational Internalist says, not that reason guarantees a conclusively motivating force, such that moral dictates always find expression in action, but rather, that reason guarantees some degree of motivation. According to Rational Internalism the motivating force of reason may, for example, be overwhelmed by other forces: motivation which arises from other powerful sources such as physical desires, emotion, or self-interest, or perhaps fatigue. Indeed, these other forces may be so powerful that whatever force reason may have may be imperceptible in their midst.

Kant, for example, the paradigmatic Rational Internalist, clearly allows for acting contrary to moral reason. He states:

> This 'I ought' is properly an 'I would,' valid for every rational being, provided only that reason determined his actions without any hindrance. But for beings that are in addition affected as we are by springs of a different kind, namely sensibility, and in whose case that is not always done which reason alone would do, for these that necessity is expressed only as an

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[1]See my chapter I, 36-37.

> 'ought,' and the subjective necessity is different from the objective.[2]

The sensible influences are so ubiquitous that Kant admits that it is impossible to judge in practice whether an act, either of our own or of others, has actually been done purely "for the sake of duty" or in response to such affective desires. This is why, for Kant, the possibility of a purely moral motivation must be something we know a priori, rather than from experience; so, for Kant, Freedom, which makes purely moral motivation possible, is an a priori condition for morality. That is, we cannot, in any ordinary sense, prove that we are free, or that any particular action is a result of Freedom; and yet the very fact that we feel the burden of obligation in the form of a categorical imperative, presupposes the possibility of Freedom. Thus, Kant is giving a "transcendental" proof of freedom, in showing that freedom is a necessary precondition of morality.

Nagel, for his part, identifies weakness, cowardice, laziness, repression, rationalization, blindness, and panic as factors which inhibit the efficacy of practical reason; and he also points out that "countervailing reasons" can also interfere--reasons which might also be moral, but which lead to contrary moral conclusions (PA, 65-66; 82).

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[2]Immanuel Kant, Fundamental Principle of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans., Thomas K. Abbott, (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., 1949), 66. Hereafter, FP in text.

Thus, contrary reasons (even moral ones), contrary desires or emotions, and contrary states of character are all inhibitors to the moral motivation guaranteed by a particular recognition of a moral obligation.

Korsgaard also states very clearly that the motivational influence of a moral consideration can suffer in light of many kinds of interferences. She claims: "Rage, passion, depression, distraction, grief, physical or mental illness: all these things could cause us to act irrationally, that is, to fail to be motivationally responsive to the rational considerations available to us."[3]

All the Rational Internalist claims, then, is that reason guarantees some motivation for the corresponding moral action, but not necessarily motivation we choose to act on. Thus, the Rational Internalist claims that it is absurd to ask if we are motivated to do what morality dictates. While other reasons may be given, ultimately, moral reasons are reasons in themselves for action, and no other types of reasons are necessary to explain a decision to act morally. That is, moral reasons are independently motivating: no other source of motivation is required in order to explain moral action. When they fail to lead to the action in keeping with morality, an explanation for the

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[3]Korsgaard, 13.

failure will have to be found in the influences of self-interest, desire or emotion, deficient states of character, or other lesser moral motives. As was already argued in Chapter Three, any version of internalism which makes the alternative claim that the recognition of moral obligation leads inevitably to corresponding moral action is trivial and philosophically uninteresting.

The second objection is: Internalism is false because having a moral obligation does not analytically entail having an associated motivation. This is Frankena's objection to internalism and his reason for opting for externalism. But this is not an objection which applies to all forms of internalism, and it certainly doesn't apply to Rational Internalism. Only the emotivist claims that having a moral obligation is analytically equal to having moral motivation; and this is because the emotivist simply identifies moral judgments as mere expressions of personal attitudes. Moral obligations are thus dependent on the presence in the moral agent of positive or negative attitudes towards certain types of actions.

Clearly, the Rational Internalist is not committed to this view. Rather, the Rational Internalist holds that, if one uses the processes of reason to discover a moral truth, then one experiences the phenomenon of moral motivation. If one has not been made aware of the fact of a moral obligation through reason, there would be no purely moral

motivation experienced at all. There may be other kinds of motivational influences present, however, even ones which encourage the performance of a moral action, but no motivation arising from moral judgments themselves. The Rational Internalist claims not that having, but that the recognition of moral obligation through reason, "entails" moral motivation. (How it is that the recognition of moral obligation entails moral motivation, is not, as yet clear. The entailment relationship will be examined closely in Chapter Seven.)

B. Objections based on Moral Indifference or Amoralism

A more serious objection to internalism is that it does not allow for, or cannot explain, moral indifference or amoralism. The argument can be generally stated as follows: Internalism is the doctrine that the recognition of moral truths entails or guarantees (some) motivation to act morally. But all of us sometimes experience indifference to the demands of morality, and some people (the moral indifferentist or the amoralist), generally lack the motivation to behave morally. Therefore, internalism is false.

The argument has an intuitive appeal, at least as stated above. In order to evaluate the strength of this argument against internalism, I think it would be useful to first identify five types of moral indifference, for it may

be that not all cases of such indifference count as evidence against internalism. Objections based on moral indifference raised by two contemporary philosophers will be examined, both in terms of the initial categorization of types of moral indifference and also in terms of their effectiveness in undermining Rational Internalism. I will argue, in fact, that only one type of moral indifference poses a problem for the Rational Internalist.

Probably the most common type of moral indifference is that which is experienced as a result of moral weakness. This type of moral indifference is sporadic rather than pervasive, occurring only in the presence of significantly strong counter desires, emotions or inclinations. It is the indifference to a particular moral demand, but not to the claims of morality generally. Let us refer to this phenomenon as Acratic Moral Indifference. We have already examined the relationship between the phenomenon of acrasia and Rational Internalism in the previous section, and need not add anything here, except to distinguish this form of indifference from others. The distinctive mark of Acratic Moral Indifference is its evanescence: it disappears with the subsiding of the countervailing emotions and desires, and is most often replaced by feelings of anguish or regret over one's moral failings. Thus, Acratic Moral Indifference is susceptible to guilt. I recognize that "moral indifference" is here being used in a much broader

sense than is usual. But the fact that we experience indifference to moral obligations, justifies the expansion of the term "moral indifference" to cover this common phenomenon.

Another common type of moral indifference is that which is experienced toward externally imposed beliefs. It is possible to be indifferent to, i.e., to experience no motivation towards, a moral belief that is relevant simply on the basis of convention or authority. The lack of motivation in this case could be a result of the fact that one finds the particular conventionally held belief, or the more general, conventionally held, criterion of moral belief, spurious, inadequate, or even repugnant. We may find ourselves or others indifferent to all or only to some conventionally held moral beliefs. Let us refer to this type of indifference as Conventional Moral Indifference.

Moral indifference, however, may be a result of a thoroughgoing lack of concern towards moral situations or issues. Unlike the occasional indifference based on convention, or occasional acratic moral indifference, this indifference is so constant or pervasive that we are warranted in referring to the phenomenon as "amoralism." Amoralism is constant, pervasive indifference that excludes normal experiences of guilt. There do seem to be individuals who simply do not engage themselves in deliberation over the moral aspects of their actions, and

who are unimpressed, in any way, by the deliberation of others.

Such a thoroughgoing lack of concern towards the moral aspects of situations may be found in two sorts of individuals. One group is driven exclusively by impulses, altogether lacking the capacity for self-control. Such individuals, described by Aristotle as the "bestial," are, fortunately, extremely rare. They are among the emotionally disturbed and are the psychopaths of society. Either these individuals lack appropriate emotional responses, or they totally lack control over their emotions. We may refer to the phenomenon of their indifference as Emotionally Perverted Amoralism. The emotional perversion may be either pervasive, extending to all areas of morality and hence extremely rare, or selective, extending only to certain moral situations. Consider, for instance, the mafia member who murders regularly, but would never lie to his mother. He might appear to have moral sensitivity and responsiveness in some areas but not in others, so his emotional perversion appears to be selective rather than pervasive. But note that it is possible that emotional perversion need not be expressed in action; and the emotionally perverted person may be sufficiently rational, or sufficiently controlled, to conform to social norms. This motivation would not be a moral one, but only self-interested or based on fear of

punishment or the like. This is Emotionally Perverted Amoralism.

On the other hand, the amoralist might have considered views behind his or her amoralism. The amoralist might believe that "morality" is for the weak, or uncreative, or the docile. We can refer to this phenomenon as Intellectually Perverted Amoralism. It seems almost certain that the intellectually perverted amoralist is also emotionally perverted; but the distinction between these two instances is that the intellectually perverted attempt to defend their lack of concern on intellectual grounds. Plato's Thrasymachus is a good example. After listening to the discussion on the nature of justice between Socrates, Cephalus and Polemarchus, he interrupts their discussion with name-calling and derision. They are all "Simple Simons" and their discourse on justice is nothing but "balderdash." He then claims that he can show that the unjust life is better than the just life, provided the injustice is sufficiently strong to overcome justice. But his criterion of morality is "might makes right," an absurd notion of morality that he cannot defend and that arguably betrays an underlying emotional disturbance. It is no wonder that Plato has Socrates describe Thrasymachus as a wild beast ready to tear Socrates and his interlocutors to pieces, and it is no wonder that Socrates' own reaction to Thrasymachus is one of fear.

Finally, we must consider whether there is a form of moral indifference in which there is a lack of motivation even when a moral judgment or belief has been arrived at authentically, that is, as a result of moral deliberation on the part of a generally thoughtful and emotionally normal person. Let us refer to this type of moral indifference as Authentic Moral Indifference. While we know that moral indifference based on acrasia, or on convention, or on emotional and/or intellectual aberrations or disturbances is possible, it may legitimately be asked whether Authentic Moral Indifference is really possible. We shall return to this topic shortly.

Now that the various types of moral indifference have been identified, we are in a better position to examine objections to internalism based on moral indifference, and to determine to what extent, if any, these undermine Rational Internalism. Two objections in contemporary literature on the subject will be examined, and then further general comments will be offered.

Ronald Milo, we saw, construes internalism as the doctrine that believing or judging something to be right or wrong entails having an appropriate pro- or con-disposition toward it. He then criticizes this view by arguing that it is possible, and showing how it is possible, to have or to arrive at a moral belief without also experiencing the associated disposition. In this way, Milo argues for the

"externalist" thesis, as he sees it, that it is possible to believe that something is wrong and not have a con-attitude toward it, or to believe that something is right and not have a pro-attitude toward it.

Milo does admit that the internalist thesis is at least intuitively or superficially appealing because if we attend to the phenomena of believing or judging something to be wrong or right, initially it seems very plausible that such mental acts should be accompanied by a corresponding motivation. If a person said he believed that something was wrong, but did not have a negative attitude or disposition toward committing the act, or if he said he believed that something was morally required, but did not have a positive attitude or disposition toward it, we would ordinarily be justified in labelling him as insincere.[4] Such a person would be regarded as paradoxical because in conversation, saying that something is wrong conventionally implies having a negative attitude toward it. We are not generally moved to say something is wrong, to utter our disapproval, unless we have the corresponding negative attitude. But this does not mean that it is impossible to believe that something is right or wrong without having the appropriate disposition toward it. As

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[4]A point made by C. L. Stevenson in Ethics and Language (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944), 16-17.

we saw in Chapter Two, Milo argues that to think this is impossible, i.e., to support internalism as he understands it, is to confuse "conversational implication" with "logical implication."

Thus, Milo argues convincingly that having a moral belief or making a moral judgment does not necessarily imply the appropriate attitudes and dispositions. For a belief can be acquired through mere application of a moral code or by making a moral evaluation based on what others have called the "moral point of view"; and such a belief need not be accompanied by a correlative attitude. What Milo is describing here is what we have called Conventional Moral Indifference. As indicated above, Milo's insights do not undermine Nagel's version of internalism, and so do not challenge Rational Internalism, provided if "recognizing" a moral truth is taken to mean something more than the operations described by Milo. Such terms as "genuine, real, authentic moral belief or judgments" were suggested to mark this difference. Rational Internalism, as put forth either by Kant or by Nagel, is certainly not the view that when reason is used only in Milo's more limited sense--to see if a certain course of action is consistent with convention, or with standards considered hypothetically or as held by others--that it is accompanied by motivation.

Secondly, David Brink criticizes internalism on the basis of the phenomenon of moral indifference. He rejects

internalism because it "overstates the connection between morality and motivation" and because "it does not take the amoralist's challenge seriously enough."[5] Amoralism is defined by Brink as a type of moral scepticism. Whereas I distinguished amoralism as a type of moral indifferentism--as moral indifferentism which is pervasive rather than sporatic; Brink uses the two terms interchangeably. The amoralist, for Brink is "someone who recognizes the existence of moral considerations and remains unmoved."[6] Brink does not rest his case against internalism on Conventional Moral Indifferentism as Milo does. He expressly and correctly claims that not all moral indifferentism can be reduced to the conventional type.[7] Because not all moral indifferentism is the result of the acceptance of a mere conventional moral belief, and because it is possible to imagine that someone can recognize an obligation and yet remain unmoved by it, Brink claims that internalism must be rejected.

Why exactly does Brink think that internalism must be rejected in view of the fact of non-conventional moral

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[5]David Brink, Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 49. This criticism against internalist was originally advanced by Brink in his article "Externalism Moral Realism," The Southern Journal of Philosophy (1986) Vol. XXIV, Supplement, 23-41.

[6]Brink, Moral Realism, 46.

[7]Ibid., 46-47.

indifferentism? We must first examine just how he conceives of internalism. He initially offers the following definition: internalism is "the view that there is an internal or conceptual connection between moral considerations and action or the sources of action," and then, (in light of the fact that some authors speak of "internalism about motivation" and others of "internalism about reasons for action") as the "claim that it is part of the concept of a moral consideration that such considerations motivate the agent to perform the moral action or provide the agent with reason to perform the moral action."[8] Further, Brink makes some attempt to distinguish between three types of internalism. The first type, "agent internalism" is the view that "moral obligations motivate, or provide reason for, the agent to do the moral thing."[9] The second type, "appraiser internalism" is the view that "it is in virtue of the concept of morality that moral belief or moral judgment provides the appraiser with motivation or reason for action."[10] The third type, "hybrid internalism" is the view that "the recognition of a moral obligation motivates or provides the agent (the person who recognizes his

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[8]Ibid., 38-39.

[9]Ibid., 40.

[10]Ibid.

obligation) with reason for action."[11] Each of these will be considered further in a moment.

In addition, Brink distinguishes between weak and strong internalism. Weak internalism is the view that "moral considerations provide some motivation" and strong internalism is the view that "moral considerations provide sufficient motivation."[12]

Now Brink's criticisms of internalism do not depend on the strong version, but only the weak, so the argument offered earlier that Rational Internalist is untouched by criticisms of the former versions does not apply here. Brink's point is to deny that moral considerations necessarily provides even a minimal degree of motivation because of the phenomena of moral indifference.

Having made all these distinctions, Brink identifies three central internalist claims: 1) that moral considerations necessarily motivate 2) that it is a priori that moral considerations do motivate and 3) the motivational power of moral considerations are not dependent on what it is that morality requires, or on facts about the agent.[13] Externalism is the view that "the motivational force and rationality of moral considerations

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[11]Ibid., 41.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 42.

depend on factors external to the moral considerations themselves.[14] So externalism recognizes that motivation may be contingent rather than necessary, and can be known only a posteriori rather than a priori, and is dependent on what it is that morality requires and facts about the agent.

Brink's rejection of internalism is best grasped as part of his larger task of defending moral realism, the view that there are objective moral truths. He identifies noncognitivism as the most traditional antirealist view, and emotivism and prescriptivism as common forms of noncognitivism which deny that moral judgments refer to objective moral facts and which characterize moral judgments as merely expressive or exhortative. Emotivism and prescriptivism are examples of internalism, because they both hold that it is part of the meaning of a moral judgment that agents hold a positive disposition to the acts they regard as moral and a negative disposition to the acts they regard as immoral. For both, it is a <u>conceptual truth</u> that moral obligations motivate.[15] Thus, it may be that Brink's criticisms of internalism are influenced by its association with noncognitivism in the form of emotivism or prescriptivism. For he clearly thinks of

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., 44.

externalism as the theory which best accommodates both the view of moral realism, and the view that morality is "practical" or "action-guiding." Internalism, he maintains, cannot give an adequate account of the "action-guiding" character of morality.

Now back to "Agent Internalism." Agent Internalism, Brink argues, is obviously mistaken and can be dismissed, because if it were true, "it would seem that our views about people's moral obligations would have to be restricted or tailored to actions which people already have a desire to perform."[16] This objection to agent internalism may not be at all obvious given his definition of it, yet it is clear that he associates agent internalism with Frankena's notion of internalism as the view that having an obligation entails motivation because his objection is phrased in Frankena's terms. For Frankena, internalism is a noncognitivist theory which denies objective moral facts. For emotivists, for example, having an obligation entails having an associated motivation only because they believe that the obligation doesn't exist unless you experience the motivation. Brink rejects agent internalism because he thinks it is obvious that our obligations are not restricted to the desires we have, and

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[16]Ibid., 45.

that restricting our obligations to desires ignores the practical or action-guiding character of morality.

It is on the grounds of the phenomenon of amoralism that Brink rejects both the "appraiser" and the "hybrid" forms of internalism. He states:

> But internalism, so construed [either as appraiser or as hybrid internalism], seems just false to the psychological facts. Although indifference to what is regarded as moral considerations may be fairly rare, it does seem to exist. Some people (e.g. certain sociopaths) do not care about what they regard as moral considerations...The (appraiser or hybrid) internalist about motives claims it is a conceptual truth about morality that moral judgment or belief motivates. According to the internalist, then, it must be conceptually impossible for someone to recognize a moral consideration or assert a moral judgment and remain unmoved. This fact raises a problem for internalism, internalism makes the amoralist conceptually impossible.[17]

This passage, because it concentrates on the sociopaths and the psychologically disordered, seems to indicate that the type of indifference Brink has in mind in his argument against internalism is Emotionally Perverted Amoralism. Other passages are less specific than this. Brink simply speaks of the fact that "we can imagine someone who regards certain demands as moral demands...and yet remains unmoved."[18] But we have seen that there are at least four other distinguishable kinds of moral

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[17]Ibid., 46.

[18]Ibid., 48.

indifference phenomena, even when we have excluded Conventional Moral Indifference. Brink thinks that the phenomenon of moral indifference is so obvious that it counts without further argument as sufficient proof for the truth of externalism. For only the externalist, he says, can take the amoralist (who asks, "Why should I care about moral considerations?) seriously.

In response to Brink's objection, we can ask: Is it true that only the externalist can come to grips with the amoralist or make sense out of the question "Why be moral?" Brink's objection is a significant objection to the forms of internalism described by Frankena or Milo; and if "externalism" is only the denial of these forms of internalism the Rational Internalist could agree with such externalism. But these forms of internalism have already been rejected in view of their limited philosophical interest. So our question remains: How significant are the phenomena of moral indifference as evidence for the inadequacy of Rational Internalism?

We have already seen that the phenomena of Acratic and Conventional Moral Indifference pose no difficulty for Rational Internalism. The Rational Internalist can accommodate both these forms of indifference rather easily, and take them very seriously indeed. Acratic Moral Indifference is possible because of the hindering influences of other motivating powers; Conventional Moral

Indifference occurs when a person is not using their powers of reason authentically and sincerely in applying a moral standard and making a moral judgment. What about Emotionally Perverted Amoralism?

The argument on the part of the externalist, including Brink in some passages, appears to be that because there are individuals who suffer from psychological disorders preventing normal moral responses, internalism is false. As mentioned, this objection clearly does undermine both Frankena's and Milo's versions of internalism. It shows that neither having, nor believing, nor (inauthentically) judging that one has an obligation necessarily implies moral motivation. But does it apply to Rational Internalism?

I believe that Rational Internalism is unscathed by this objection, and in order to demonstrate this I shall rely on an analogical argument. We would not deny that the human eye has the power to see color on the basis of the fact that certain individuals are color blind. In the same way, I believe, we should not deny that human reason has the power to guarantee moral motivation on the basis of the fact that certain individuals are not capable of such motivation. Color blindness is a result of a structural defect in the anatomy of the eye, present only in a few individuals. Emotional perversion which makes us indifferent to the suffering of others, is also rare. When

we say that the human eye has the power to see color we mean that in most suitably constituted individuals the eye perceives color. When the Rational Internalist says that human reason has the power to motivate, he or she means that in most suitably constituted individuals reason provides moral motivation. Contrary to Brink, the rarity of such individuals is indeed relevant. Not only do we think that it is normal for people to be able to see color, and to be able to be responsive to the recognition of moral obligations, but we think that it is desirable and valuable.

Since, as I have suggested, Intellectually Perverted Amoralism depends on the presence in the individual of an emotional perversion, the comments made on Emotionally Perverted Amoralism apply as well to Intellectually Perverted Amoralism. Rational Internalism is not refuted by the admission that such amoralism exists, because Rational Internalism can admit that it presupposes not only normal, but desirable and valuable human traits.

Brink argues that in view of the sociopath, the "internalist must give up his claim that recognition of moral considerations implies actual motivation."[19] But the Rational Internalist needn't do this. What the Rational Internalist must admit, however, when they advance the

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[19]Ibid., 27.

thesis of the morally motivating power of reason, they mean "in a suitably constituted, normal, individual"; that is, in an individual that is not defective. It is true that this is a more limited claim, but we would not object to the claim that the human eye has the capacity to see color on the basis of its similar limitedness. As was suggested during the examination of Mill's views earlier, what the Rational Internalist is questioning is whether or not it is really possible for emotionally perverted sociopaths to "recognize" the obligations to which they are indifferent.

We are left with questions of whether what we have called Authentic Moral Indifference can be called upon to formulate a rejection of Rational Internalism. Authentic Moral Indifference occurs when a normally constituted human being, untethered by powerful inclinations, recognizes a moral obligation and remains unmoved. If indeed this possibility exists, and if the recognition of the moral obligation is through reason, then Rational Internalism is false. But the Rational Internalist can simply deny that it is possible. Any counterexample raised by the externalist will be explained away by the Rational Internalist in terms of one of the other forms of moral indifference; no proof could possibly be given that none of the alternative accounts are adequate.

If my categorization of types of moral indifference is adequate, then, the phenomena of moral indifference do not

themselves provide proof that Rational Internalism is false unless evidence of Authentic Moral Indifference can be offered. But the Rational Internalist will claim that it cannot be demonstrated that there are examples of this form of indifference, because all experiential examples fall into the other four categories. This is what Brink means when he says that for the internalist, moral motivation is an a priori part of moral reasoning and is not dependent on what it is that is in fact required, or on subjective facts about the agent's desires or wishes. Note, however, that for Rational Internalism, moral motivation is not a priori because the meaning of having a moral obligation is that one has a certain positive or negative disposition; this is the emotivist version of internalism set aside earlier. Reason is understood by Rational Internalism to guarantee, by its very nature, motivation to act. I will discuss the idea of the a priori connection in Chapter 7, where I examine the precise nature of the so-called entailment relation between moral cognition and moral motivation.

Now Brink believes that the contention that moral motivation is a priori is not true to the facts; the truth is the externalist claim that moral motivation can be known only a posteriori. Common sense, he says, recognizes that moral considerations motivate only <u>contingently</u>--that there are limitations on the actual motivating force a moral

consideration might have.[20] As above, however, the Rational Internalist can agree that it is a contingent matter whether or not moral considerations will be the ultimate or overriding motivation, and whether or not a given individual will have moral motivation or be aberrant. What the Rational Internalist maintains is that the rational recognition, if there is any, of a moral obligation, is essentially motivating. Brink does not adduce any facts or any other arguments that disprove the Rational Internalist's claim here.

C. Objection to Rational Internalism by W. Prior: Rational Internalism gives a distortive account of morality

Unlike the objections we have considered so far, the objection to be examined in this section is one which is directed against Rational Internalism specifically. I think that the objection is worthy of consideration, because it puts into argument form a very common suspicion about Kantian ethics. The objection is articulated by William Prior in his article, "Compassion: A Critique of Moral Rationalism."[21] Moral Rationalism is defined vaguely by Prior as the theory that reason is the "source of moral

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[20]Ibid., 49.

[21]William J. Prior, "Compassion: A Critique of Moral Rationalism," Philosophy and Theology, Vol. 2 (Winter, 1989): 173-91.

value," that "moral goodness and rightness are the products of rationality."[22] This definition is vague because it could mean that reason is the source of moral value or that moral goodness is a product of reason either because reason discovers what is moral or good, or because reason motivates actions which are morally good, or both. Prior vacillates between criticisms of the view that reason provides the justification for morality and the view that reason provides the motivation for morality without acknowledgement. Since our focus is on theories of moral motivation, I will concentrate on his objections to rationalist theories of motivation. He identifies Kant as a moral rationalist, and argues that Kant's theory of moral motivation (that is, Kant's Rational Internalism) is inadequate because it "provides a distorted picture of our moral lives."[23] Kant's Rational Internalism distorts moral life by claiming that only actions done for the sake of duty (recognizable by reason alone) have moral worth.

Prior argues that not enough attention is paid to the role of the sentiment of compassion, and that in the history of ethical philosophy only David Hume has

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[22]Ibid., 179.

[23]Ibid., 173.

adequately noted its central role in moral life.[24] By saying that compassion is the true source of moral value, Prior means both that compassion tells us what to do and that compassion provides the motivation to act accordingly. Rationalists have ignored the importance of compassion, he says, and for this reason, give an unsatisfactory account of morality.

Prior begins his article by recounting the biblical story of the Good Samaritan, and arguing that the Good Samaritan acted, not on the dictates of reason, but through compassion, as the biblical text expressly indicates. The Samaritan had the motivation to help the "half-dead" man because of his compassion for him, while those who passed by failed to respond because of their lack of compassion. Compassion is the mark of a normal and psychologically healthy individual. Those who lack compassion are simply emotionally deficient--they are lacking an important part of their emotional make up. The Samaritan exhibits virtue and practical wisdom. He has practical wisdom because "he is able to find and follow a course of action that benefits the victim of the robbers."[25]

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[24]Prior ignores others who have emphasized the role of compassion in moral life, notably Adam Smith, Lord Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson.

[25]Prior, 174.

Prior traces the etymology of the word, "compassion," to its Greek origins. The Greek word for compassion is esplangchnisthe, which derives from the word splangchnizomai. The splangchna refer to bodily organs, and so the word means: "to feel in one's innards." Therefore, the word, "compassion," originally had a connotation of being a "visceral reaction." For Prior, compassion, at least in its paradigm cases, "is a strong emotion or sentiment with physical components."[26] He classifies compassion along with our other "physical appetites;" he identifies others as guilt, pride, greed, and varieties of love. These are emotions which serve as "springs of action." He concludes that "compassion is the emotion that causes us to act well toward others in need."[27] Compassion is primarily to be understood as a response to another human being in need, but it is possible to experience compassion toward non-humans (animals or aliens) because of their similar psychological, physical or emotional constitutions.

While he emphasizes the emotional aspect of compassion, Prior nevertheless does maintain that compassion does have a "cognitive component," and hence that reason plays an important role in moral life.

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[26]Ibid., 175.

[27]Ibid.

compassion would never be aroused unless we could identify the situations where compassion would be the appropriate response. We need to recognize, cognitively, situations where people are in need. The discrimination which is necessary for this recognition is cognitive. He even allows that sometimes actions are done without any feeling of compassion. But Prior does not think that the cognitive recognition is prior to compassionate response. He states:

> We do not, I think, first recognize the occurrence of these situations by the use of our cognitive faculties, and then respond to them via our emotion; rather we recognize and respond to these situations in virtue of a single faculty with both cognitive and emotional aspects.[28]

Prior's quarrel, then, is not with those who claim that there is a role for reason in morality, but with those who exclude the role of compassion and sentiment from morality. Prior sees Kant as doing just that, because Kant claimed that actions have moral worth only if they are motivated by reason, rather than inclination. Inclinations are feelings, emotions, desires and sentiments which influence conduct. Kant's view, Prior says, is that "Even these positive inclinations...are devoid of moral worth; for an action to be of moral worth it must be motivated solely by a sense of duty, and duty is determined by reason rather than inclination."[29] Citing the passage where Kant

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., 179.

expressly denies that the actions done by the sympathetically constituted philanthropist have moral worth, Prior claims that Kant prefers the actions of the "unhappy philanthropist," the "person who is charitable from duty over the person who is charitable because of a sympathetic constitution."[30] Surely, he urges, this should lead us to suspect that Kant's moral theory gives a distorted account of moral life.

This indeed is a problematic claim for many readers of Kant. And since Kant has been identified as the paradigmatic Rational Internalist, it raises a problem for Rational Internalism. Based on Kant's claim that only dutiful actions have true moral worth, Rational Internalism might be interpreted as the view that the only motivator to morally correct actions is reason. But Prior's error, and the error of those who raise the same objection, arises generally out of a failure to attend to the passages in his best known works, and also in the lesser known ones, in which Kant speaks positively about the role of natural human sentiments such as sympathy and compassion; and specifically, out of a failure to understand and to keep in perspective Kant's claim that only actions done for the sake of duty have moral worth, or are moral in the strict sense. In addressing Prior's criticism of Kant's theory of

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[30]Ibid., 180.

moral motivation, I will first show that a more careful and comprehensive reading of Kant's works shows that he does think that natural sentiments of sympathy and compassion play an important motivational role in ethical life. Then I will argue that if Kant's claim that only actions done for the sake of duty have true moral worth is understood properly, it does not have to be seen as a view which is distortive, or inconsistent with common attitudes about moral life.

Kant nowhere in his mature ethical works says, or even implies, that it is wrong or ignoble to take pleasure out of acting morally, or to feel compassion or sympathy for our fellow human beings. In fact, he explicitly, even if not often, claims that it is good to experience such pleasure, and to respond sympathetically and compassionately with others. In his early lectures on ethics, Kant claimed that feelings of sympathy should be cultivated, in order to encourage virtuous conduct. "To be humane is to have sympathy with the fate of others" he says, and "the more we refine the crude elements of our nature, the more we refine our humanity and the more capable it grows of feeling the driving force of virtuous principles."[31] In the Fundamental Principles, Kant does

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[31]Immanuel Kant, Lectures on Ethics, trans., Louis Infield, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), 198; 237.

say that the philanthropist who experiences joy in their benevolence "deserves praise and encouragement" (FP, 14). In the Critique of Practical Reason, in fact, he goes as far as to say that we have the duty to "establish and cultivate" the feeling of satisfaction in the fulfillment of duty.[32]

These ideas are expressed in more detail in his later ethical work, The Metaphysics of Morals. There Kant calls compassion a "natural predisposition very serviceable to morality."[33] He makes a distinction between humanitas practica, the humanity "which is seated in the capacity and will to share another's feeling" and humanitas aesthetica, the "susceptibility for mutual feelings of enjoyment or pain which nature herself provides."[34] Only the former is a result of freedom and practical reason; the latter is simply a somewhat contagious natural feeling. Kant claims that we cannot have a duty to have feelings of compassion, sympathy, or pity, but we do have a duty of humanitas practica. He states:

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[32]Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, trans., Lewis White Beck, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1956), 40. Hereafter, referred to in text as CPrR.

[33]Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue: Part II of the Metaphysics of Morals., trans. James Ellington, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1964) 106.

[34]Kant, The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue, 121.

> But though it is not in itself a duty to feel pity and so likewise to rejoice with others, active sympathizing with their lot is a duty. To this end it accordingly is an indirect duty to cultivate our natural (sensitive) feelings for others, and to make use of them as so many means for sympathy based on moral principles and the feeling appropriate to them...It is a duty not to shun sickrooms or prisons and so on in order to avoid the pain of compassion, which one may not be able to resist. For this feeling, though painful, nevertheless is one of the impulses placed in us by nature for effecting what the representation of duty might not accomplish by itself.[35]

Far from denying, then, that feelings of sympathy or satisfaction in the fulfillment of duty are motivators to moral action, Kant is actually claiming that we have a duty to cultivate them--that we should develop within ourselves these feelings because they are instrumental in the perfection of our moral lives. These passages show that Kant regarded these feelings as not only natural but serviceable to morality. Because they are so serviceable, Kant says that the perfection and enhancement of our moral existences requires their cultivation.

Turning now to the specific error of Prior's interpretation of Kant's Rational Internalism, I will argue that just because Kant attributes <u>true moral worth</u> only to actions done for the sake of duty, does not mean that he thought of actions done out of inclination as immoral, or even that he thought of action done for the sake of duty as the only ones which are moral, in a looser sense of being

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[35]Ibid., 122.

morally correct. Admittedly, the confusion is understandable in light of certain statements made by Kant. I believe, however, that Kant's claim that only actions done for the sake of duty have true moral worth can be understood in such a way as to allow other motivators to moral action, and in such a way which is not distortive or out of keeping with common attitudes about morality. I turn now, then, to an examination of Kant's writing in order to show that Kant, in claiming that only actions done for the sake of duty have true moral worth, has not given a distorted theory about moral motivation.

In the Preface to the Fundamental Principles Kant claims that "in order that an action should be morally good, it is not enough that it conform to the moral law, but it must also be done for the sake of the law; otherwise that conformity is only very contingent and uncertain" (FP, 6). From this passage it certainly seems like Kant is saying that only those acts which are done for the sake of the law are moral acts. On this interpretation, we need not claim that the act which coheres with, but is not done for the sake of duty is immoral, because not all acts which are not moral are immoral; some are amoral. And surely Kant could not have possibly meant (nor does he give any indication of meaning) that if I preserve my life out of inclination, then I am acting immorally. Even in light of this clarification, then, we would have to admit that on

this interpretation Kant would say that if Mother Theresa's acts of charity were undertaken for the purpose of achieving everlasting life, or out of a natural sympathy for her fellow human beings, then her acts are not moral--that is, that they are amoral acts. Yet I think most would want to say that Mother Theresa's acts (however motivated) are definitely moral.

The confusion arises because when Kant refers to actions as "morally good" or as "having moral worth" he is speaking in a strict, we could even say, in a stipulative sense. He does not think that actions done out of inclinations are devoid of moral worth in that they are morally incorrect. A passage which indicates that such actions are moral in the sense of being morally correct is the following:

> If the determination of the will occurs in accordance with the moral law but only by means of a feeling of any kind whatsoever, which must be presupposed in order that the law may become a determining ground of the will, and if the action thus occurs not for the sake of the law, it has legality but not morality (CPrR, 74, emphasis added).

When Kant speaks of an action as having "legality" he is speaking of actions which are moral in the common, everyday sense of being morally correct. He maintains that these actions are both "proper" and "amiable" (FP, 16). But when Kant speaks of an action as being moral in his strict sense, he is referring to actions which are done for the

sake of duty. But why does Kant stipulate that only morally correct actions done for the sake of duty have true moral worth, while at the same time encouraging us to develop, indeed, telling us that we have a duty to develop, feelings of sympathy and the satisfaction of acting dutifully?

The answer to this question can only be understood in light of Kant's overall project in both the Fundamental Principles and the Critique of Practical Reason. In these works Kant is attempting to discover the conditions or the "grounds" of morality, and he says repeatedly that morality would not be possible without the requirement of freedom. It is actions done for the sake of duty that reveal the possibility and grounds of morality most clearly and in a way that actions dictated by a heteronomous will do not. When we act for the sake of duty we are most aware of our Freedom as moral beings; it is in these acts that Freedom's role as the ground of morality is most evident. So by distinguishing actions done for the sake of duty from those which are done out of inclination, Kant uncovers the grounds or conditions of morality in general most clearly. Because actions done for the sake of duty reveal the conditions of the possibility of morality they are said to have true moral worth. Now, it is not inconsistent with common intuitions to think of actions done from duty as somehow separate, and "more special" than those done simply

out of inclination. Kant can make this claim even while allowing that most of our (morally correct) actions may be done out of inclination.

Now that we have seen that Kant recognizes the value of sympathy and compassion, and now that we understand Kant's claim that only actions done for the sake of duty have true moral worth as a stipulative one, we can turn our attention back to Prior's claim that Kant prefers the actions of the "unhappy philanthropist," in order to see if or in what way it is true, and then to determine whether or not Kant's theory of moral motivation is distortive of morality.

There are senses in which it is true that Kant prefers acts which are done from a sense of duty, i.e., that have moral worth, to those which are a result of natural inclinations--even those of sympathy or compassion. As I have already shown, duty is a reliable source for understanding the grounds for the possibility of morality while inclination is not. So Kant "prefers" actions done for the sake of duty because they reveal the possibility of morality in a way other actions do not. Moreover, Kant prefers acts which are done out of a sense of duty because he believes that duty provides a more reliable guide than inclinations. Desires and inclinations are by their nature particular, sporadic, and contingent; hence, they cannot be reliable sources of moral motivation. A sympathetic person

habituated only to act from inclination may be taken advantage of by others, and as a result become suspicious and misanthropic, losing all sympathetic inclination. If the sense of duty were not itself motivating, we could not speak of moral obligation where sympathy is absent.[36] But if the person has disciplined themselves to act from a sense of duty, regardless of any desire in them to experience pleasure, the motivation to act morally is assured. Only in this sense does Kant does prefer the person who acts from duty to the person who acts from inclination, however noble.

Prior here ignores Kant's passages that urge us to become the sort of persons who take pleasure in acting morally. But, as we have seen, Kant says that the philanthropist deserves praise and encouragement because the joy that he experiences facilitates concordance with the moral law (CPrR, 122). Kant says he does not deserve our esteem unless he is free to act benevolently even where he will experience no such pleasure. Prior's claim that Kant prefers the "unhappy" philanthropist is further distorted in that Kant clearly holds that, while the highest good for man is the perfection of his moral character--his ability to act for the sake of duty, the supreme good exists only when the philanthropist who acts

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[36]Kant, Lectures on Ethics, 193.

from the sense of duty, is also rewarded in happiness. Kant prefers not the "unhappy" philanthropist, but the philanthropist who acts for the sake of duty, and who is also happy.[37]

It is true that Kant does not dwell on the important experience of compassion, and on the indubitable fact of its motivating power, in his studies of the grounds of morality. Yet, this lack of emphasis is understandable in view of his whole approach to the phenomenon and the meaning of morality. Kant, as a Rational Internalist, seeks only to assert the positive claim that reason has motivating power. He does not make the negative claim that it is the only source of moral motivation.

Although Prior's objection to moral rationalism is targeted at Kant, his objections are also not applicable to other Rational Internalists, such as Nagel and Korsgaard. While it is true that Nagel does not dwell on the experience of compassion and its role in moral life, it is also true that he says nothing to deny that compassion can, or even often does, operate behind moral acts of benevolence, or using Nagel's term, "altruism".[38] He

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[37]See Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, 128-132, where Kant criticizes the Stoical ideal in light of the fact that they equated happiness with virtue.

[38]Nagel defines altruism not as "abject self-sacrifice", but as the "willingness to act in consideration of the interests of other persons, without the need of ulterior motives" (79).

doesn't dwell on the experience of compassion because, like Kant, he is intent on showing that the motivation to act morally is guaranteed by the recognition of moral obligations themselves, and even when the feeling of compassion is absent in a situation where benevolence is morally required, it is possible to act altruistically. In fact, the point of his argument in The Possibility of Altruism is that the appeal to compassion in the account of altruistic actions, like the appeal to self-interest or sympathy, is unnecessary. In his "general reply" to those who insist on such other appeals, Nagel states:

> Without question people may be motivated by benevolence, sympathy, love, redirected self-interest, and various other influences, on some of the occasions on which they pursue the interests of others, but that there is also something else, a motivation available when none of those are, and also operative when they are present, which has genuinely the status of a rational requirement on human conduct (PA, 80).

Since Korsgaard's main focus in her article was simply to show that "motivational skepticism" is based on "content skepticism" she does not develop in detail a theory of rational internalism. However, she says nothing to deny that compassion plays an important role in moral life, and nothing she says could count as evidence for the view that Rational Internalism, as a theory of moral motivation, gives an essentially distortive account of moral life.

Conclusion. What have we learned in this chapter? We have learned that none of the objections to versions of internalism in the recent philosophical literature undermines Rational Internalism's claim to correctly describe moral motivation. Some of the objections are addressed to other philosophically less interesting versions of internalism, and don't apply to Rational Internalism at all. Others call attention to forms of moral indifference whose reality Rational Internalism has no need to deny. Prior's argument, is based on a misreading of Kant's account of moral motivation, and thus, of the theory here called Rational Internalism generally.

We are left, then, with the original common sense argument for Rational Internalism, which Nagel summarizes when he says that it is unacceptable to "permit someone who has acknowledged that he should do something and has seen why it is the case that he should do it to ask whether he has any reason for doing it" (PA, 9). We need now to confront the remaining objection still threatening Rational Internalism, Hume's objection that Rational Internalism is false because reason is incapable of providing moral motivation.

CHAPTER 5

HUME'S CHALLENGE

If Rational Internalism is understood to be the view that reason is itself a source of moral motivation, then its most formidable opponent in the history of philosophy is usually taken to be David Hume. Hume denies that reason can function in either of these ways: by itself it can neither determine what is morally right or wrong, nor provide any motivation to act morally. "Reason," he says, "is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."[1] If we take Kant as a "paradigmatic rational-internalist," then his position and that of Hume's would seem to be diametrically opposed; and an evaluation of Rational Internalism as a theoretical view surely must include an examination of the points of opposition between these two philosophers. In order to make an adequate

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[1]David Hume, A Treatise on Human Nature, 2nd edition, ed., L. A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 415. Hereafter, referred to in the text as T.

appraisal of the dispute we need to be able to identify what is really at issue between their views.

In this chapter I will focus on the dispute between Kant and Hume. I will argue that the differences between them are far less than is often thought, and that the appearance of opposition is a result of the different emphases each philosopher has in light of their respective tasks. Thus, once we understand why Hume says that reason can only be the slave of the passions, and once we understand why Kant says that only reason can determine what is moral, the differences are greatly lessened. I will also argue that the real dispute between them is not so much on matters of ethics as it is on matters of metaphysics. That is, the differences between Kant and Hume as moral philosophers are actually a function of their opposing views of the nature of reason. When this examination has been completed, we will have arrived at a much clearer understanding of Rational Internalism and be able to make progress in determining if, and to what extent, it is a defensible theory.

Before contrasting Kant with Hume on the role of reason in morality, however, a comment is needed on the current debate about whether Hume should be classified as an internalist or as an externalist. Of course, Hume can be labelled as either one or the other depending on what the terms "internalism" and "externalism" are taken to

mean. Whether Hume is an internalist or an externalist depends on the understanding of the internalist/externalist distinction with which one begins. However, Charlotte Brown raises the question of whether Hume is an internalist given Nagel's version of internalism. She argues that while Hume's argument from motivation used to refute the rationalists of his time commits him to (Nagelian) internalism, what he says in his "constructive phase" reveals that he is really a (Nagelian) externalist.[1]

Therefore, in the first section of this chapter I will untangle the debate on the classification of Hume within the internalist/externalist debate. Then in the second section, I will examine Hume's arguments that reason can neither determine what is moral, nor be a moral motivator, and try to determine what exactly is the role of reason in morality for Hume. In the third section, I will examine Kant's argument that only reason can determine what is moral, and his argument that reason is a moral motivator. In the final section, as I have indicated, I will show that a careful comparison of their arguments leads to a significant deemphasis of the differences between Kant and Hume, and that to the extent that there remains a real difference, this difference is a metaphysical one having to do with their understanding of the nature of reason. In

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[1]Charlotte Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?" Journal of the History of Philosophy 26, January, 1988.

doing this I will also establish that Hume's objections to what I have called Rational Internalism are not at all convincing.

I

Is Hume an Internalist or an Externalist?

Let us begin by reviewing Hume's place in the internalist/externalist distinctions of Frankena, Milo, Nagel, and Korsgaard, in order to set the scene for Charlotte Brown, the most recent commentator of Hume as an internalist or an externalist. For Frankena, internalism is the thesis that having a moral obligation implies the existence of personal inclination or desire, so that a person is not obligated to do something unless they in fact have a desire to do it, whereas externalism denies this, holding that obligations exist independent of any particular agent's desires. Whether or not Hume is an internalist or an externalist on this account depends on whether Hume is or is not committed to moral realism. Those who interpret Hume as an emotivist or as some other kind of subjectivist will, on Frankena's definition, think of Hume as an internalist; while those who interpret Hume as a moral realist, will think of Hume as an externalist. There are a surprising number of Hume scholars who

interpret Hume as a subjectivist.[2] My own interpretation is that Hume is a moral realist. A typical passage which supports this interpretation is the following:

> The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And tho' the heart does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all of our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools (T, 603).

The fact that Hume speaks of a "general unalterable standard" shows that he believes that morality is universal, involving the same standard for all human beings. Hume acknowledges the fact that our feelings of sympathy can be unreliable; but he expresses confidence in our moral judgments. He states: "though our sympathies vary, yet our moral judgments do not vary with them; for we fix on some steady and general points of view, and always in our thought place ourselves in them whatever may be our present situation" (T, 581). Further evidence for Hume's standing as a moral realist rather than a subjectivist are

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[2]Some who have interpreted Hume as an emotivist or a subjectivist are C. D. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), x, 85-86; D. C. C. McNabb, The Encylopedia of Philosophy; Geoffrey Hunter, "Hume on Is and Ought," Philosophy, 37 (1962): 151-152; Philippa Foot, "Hume on Moral Judgement," in David Hume: A Symposium (London: Macmillan, 1966), 70-72; Antony Flew, "Hume," in A Critical History of Western Philosophy, ed. D. J. O'Connor (London: Macmillan, 1964), 271; and Thomas Reid, Philosophical Works (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchandlung, 1967), 670-679.

found in the Enquiry, where he states that moral distinctions "arise from the original constitution of human nature" and "can only be explained by a sentiment common to all men and extending to the actions of all men however remote."[3] David Fate Norton, Pall Ardal, and W. D. Falk are three important figures who reject the subjectivist interpretation in favor of the view that Hume is a moral realist.[4] In Frankena's categorization, then, Hume would be an "externalist."

The classification of Hume as internalist or externalist on Milo's interpretation of the distinction is straightforward. For Milo thinks of internalism as the thesis that any moral belief or judgment implies the existence of a pro-attitude or motivation to act accordingly (though this motivation may be overridden by other motivators), and of externalism as the thesis that it is possible to have a moral belief, or to make a moral judgment, without thereby have the corresponding motivation to act or refrain from acting. Clearly, when Hume talks

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[3]David Hume, Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals in Enquiries, ed., L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., (Westport, Connecticut: Oxford University Press, 1980), 173; 221-222. (Hereafter, E.)

[4]David Fate Norton, David Hume: Common Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician, (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 110; Pall Ardal, Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 208; W. D. Falk, "Hume on Practical Reason" in Ought, Reasons, and Morality (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 144-148.

about moral beliefs or judgment, he is referring to the beliefs or judgments which accompany moral sentiment. Following Hutcheson, Hume thinks of moral beliefs or judgments as arising when we "consult our own breasts," and experience moral approval or disapproval.[5] Hume, like Milo, could very well envision inauthentic statements of moral belief or inauthentic judgments (judgments based on a standard one does not genuinely accept) unaccompanied by any corresponding attitudes. On this interpretation of "internalism," then, Hume would join Milo in siding with "externalism." While there is no textual evidence that Hume would accept this possibility of inauthentic beliefs or judgments without corresponding motivational attitudes, the assumption that he would is natural, since it is an obvious possibility, and he says nothing to the contrary.

Nagel clearly thinks of Hume as a "strong anti-rational internalist." He thinks of Hume as an internalist because, for Hume, moral motivation is "guaranteed by the truth or the meaning of ethical propositions." His "internalism" is strong, because he ties motivation not to the meaning, but to the recognition of the truth of ethical propositions. He is an anti-rational internalist because he denies that reason in and of itself (independently of

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[6]Francis Hutcheson, An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil, in British Moralists 1650-1800, ed., D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 303; David Hume, Treatise, 469.

desire or inclination) has motivational influence--that is, because he holds that all moral motivation is rooted in desire. Nagel states:

> If we cast [Hume's anti-rational internalist view] in terms of reasons, it will state that among the conditions for the presence of a reason for action there must always be a desire or inclination capable of motivating one to act accordingly.[6]

We saw that Korsgaard interprets Nagel as suggesting that internalism is the view that the reason for the action is itself the motive for doing it. In Chapter 3 I suggested that this interpretation is defensible in light of some of Nagel's example, but that it wasn't entirely clear that this formulation is coextensive with Nagel's. According to this formulation, Hume is an internalist because he believes that sympathy determines what is moral and also provides the motive for being moral.

As I have interpreted Korsgaard, the "internalism" she defends is Nagel's "strong rational internalism." I suggested that this may be the most interesting question underlying the internalist\externalist debate, and that Korsgaard suggests that internalism should be thought of as

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[6]Nagel, PA, 10.

Rational Internalism. Since Hume is an anti-rationalist, Hume would be considered by her to be an externalist.[7]

Brown claims that the standard interpretation of Hume is as an internalist. Citing Nagel, she describes internalism as the view that "the awareness that a certain course of action is the right one by itself provides an agent with a motive, though not necessarily one sufficient to outweigh others which might also be present."[8] She argues that "charity" requires the interpretation of Hume as such an internalist, because otherwise Hume's argument from motivation is invalid. Let us see why Brown claims that Hume's argument from motivation commits him to internalism in the above sense, and then why Brown argues that Hume is inconsistent in his internalism.

Hume's argument from motivation draws the conclusion that reason cannot determine what is morally right or wrong from the following two premises: 1) Morality is practical, that is, it influences actions (T, 457), and 2) reason alone is incapable of influencing either passions or actions (T, 457; 413-418). Now Brown argues that Hume's

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[7]This inference followed from the fact that Korsgaard defends Nagel's "rational internalism" and she appears to take Hume as her main target. In a later unpublished paper, "Normativity as Reflexivity," Brown gives a different reason for thinking of Hume as an externalist. Her reason for labelling Hume an externalist in this paper is the same reason given by Charlotte Brown in her article to be considered shortly.

[8]Brown, 74.

premise that morality is practical can be interpreted in either of two ways. One way morality can be practical is if moral perceptions (the awareness of moral obligation) "trigger" a desire to do what is moral. Another way morality can be practical is if moral perceptions themselves are motivators. On the former view, the "trigger" view, recognition of a moral obligation and the motivation to act accordingly are distinct and therefore logically separable.[9] But on the latter view, the "internalist" view, they are not: moral perceptions are themselves necessarily motivating, and if the moral agent lacks any motivation to act morally, he or she simply has not perceived a moral obligation.

If Hume is interpreted as holding that the recognition of a moral obligation stimulates or motivates by triggering a desire to do what is right (rather than being itself the source of motivation to act morally), then his conclusion that reason cannot make moral distinctions does not follow. On the "trigger view" it would be possible for reason to make moral distinctions, even if morality is practical and even if reason alone cannot motivate. Therefore, on the "trigger" theorist's understanding of how morality can be practical, Hume's argument from motivation is invalid. So,

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[9]Brown, 74: "moral thought or perception and motivation are not logically distinct on [the internalist's] view, as they are according to the trigger theory."

Brown claims that in order for the argument to be valid, Hume must adopt the "internalist" interpretation.

For Brown, the question of whether Hume really is an internalist depends on whether or not he consistently holds that the moral sentiments are in themselves motivating. For those who think it is obvious that Hume thinks of moral sentiments as moral determinators and moral motivators, Brown raises two problems. Then she cites passages where Hume seems to be claiming that it is really something else that provides moral motivation besides moral sentiment.

The first reason we cannot assume that moral sentiment is morally motivating, she says, is that although Hume clearly holds that all motivation, both moral and non-moral, is derived from feeling, and although he holds that moral sentiments are a kind of feeling, it does not follow that moral sentiments do in fact motivate. Brown argues that moral sentiment may not have a motivating influence because, according to Hume, not all feelings are motivators. Love and hate are feelings, but they are not, in themselves, motives. They motivate only by giving rise to benevolence and anger, feelings which do motivate. Brown points out that Hume gives no clear cut criteria with which to discriminate motivating and nonmotivating feelings.[10]

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[10]Brown, 77.

Secondly, Brown argues that we cannot assume that just because moral sentiments refer to moral approval or disapproval, that motivation is conceptually implied. Although normally approval carries with it connotations of inclination and hence motivation, Hume is using the terms in a technical sense, as referring to a unique kind of moral feeling. These moral feelings are simple, so they cannot be defined, and hence, cannot be said to be motivating on conceptual grounds.[11]

Brown now goes on to argue that Hume, in fact, quite explicitly identifies other motivating factors. She reviews Hume's discussion of actions performed from a sense of duty. Hume admits that sometimes people, realizing in themselves the lack of a natural human sentiment, perform actions out of a sense of duty. He states:

> When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that principle, may hate himself upon that account, and may perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to disguise to himself, as much as possible his want of it (T, 479).

Further, Hume claims that virtue is associated with feelings of pride and love, and vice is associated with humility and hate (T, 294-97, 336-39, 575). Hume also believes that we can only feel proud of ourselves and love ourselves if we are virtuous: "Inward peace of mind,

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[11]Brown, 77-78.

consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct--these are circumstances very requisite to our happiness" (E, 283).

On the basis of these statements Brown concludes that according to Hume it is actually pride and the desire for happiness that provides motivation to act morally. Where virtuous motives are lacking and a person acts for the sake of duty, Brown claims, then for Hume,

> that regard [for the moral worth of the action] has motivational force only because it triggers self-hatred and the desire to be happy...The regard for the moral worth of the action does not by itself provide agents with a motive.[12]

This, she concludes, is not an internalist view; that is, it is not a view in which the apprehension of a moral obligation itself is the motivation to act morally.

Now I do not believe that Brown has given a convincing account of Hume's views. In response to the first problem that we can not be sure that Hume thought of moral sentiments as intrinsically motivating because not all feelings motivate, I need only cite a passage which provides contrary evidence:

> As to the good or ill desert of virtue or vice, 'tis an evident consequence of the sentiments of pleasure or uneasiness. These sentiments produce love or hatred; and love or hatred, by the original constitution of human passion, is attended with benevolence or anger (T, 591, emphasis added).

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[12]Brown, 83.

If virtue and vice naturally produce pleasure and uneasiness in the form of moral sentiment, and these in turn naturally produce love and hatred, and these in turn produce, by our natural constitution as human beings, benevolence and anger, there can be no doubt that moral sentiments are regarded by Hume as morally motivating. So, given Brown's understanding of the internalist thesis Hume is an internalist.

In response to the second problem that we cannot on any conceptual basis assume that moral sentiment of approval or disapproval are morally motivating because these are simple concepts, and as such, insusceptible of definition, I need only point out that the simplicity of the concept of moral approval does not prevent us from recognizing intuitively its motivating force. One might as well say that, because the notion of goodness is simple and incapable of definition, then we cannot know whether it is desirable.

The textual evidence Brown gives to support her externalist conclusion is quite meagre. Undoubtedly, Hume does claim that people can act from a sense of duty, and be actually motivated by a desire to be happy. Had he not allowed for this "moral" phenomenon, he would have given an incomplete account of moral psychology. But the tenor of Hume's moral writings overwhelmingly contrasts with the

view that morality depends on self-love, either in the form of self-interest or the desire to be happy.

Hume, and Hutcheson before him, take pains to dissociate themselves from a Hobbesian view of morality. Hutcheson identifies his main task in his work Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil as attempting to prove both that there is a moral sense by which we approve of actions and that it is possible to commit moral actions independently of any self-interest.[13] Hume's Treatise contains long and numerous passages on the efficacy of sympathy, as the motivating force behind both artificial and natural virtues. While he allows self-interest as an "original motive" to justice, an artificial virtue, he insists that "sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation which attends that virtue" (T, 499-500). He states:

> We are to consider this distinction betwixt justice and injustice, as having two different foundations, viz. that of self-interest, when men observe, that 'tis impossible to live in society without restraining themselves by certain rules; and that of morality, when this interest is once observ'd to be common to all mankind, and men receive a pleasure from the view of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and an uneasiness from such as are contrary to it (T, 533).

This pleasure or uneasiness is a result of our capacity for moral sentiment. We approve of natural

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[13]Francis Hutcheson, Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil, in British Moralists, 306.

virtues for the same reason we approve of artificial virtues like justice--they contribute to the good of society. But we naturally approve of virtue; it is an immediate and irresistible response. He states: "the tendency of qualities to the good of society, is the sole cause of our approbation; without any suspicion of the concurrence of another principle" (T, 578).[14] Brown's interpretation that Hume says we act morally in order to be happy explicitly contradicts this claim: it is to assert the necessity of the "concurrence of another principle".

Further, the passage depended heavily upon by Brown where Hume notes the important role integrity and peace of mind for personal happiness (E, 283) must be understood within the context of the discussion in which it occurs. It occurs in the last part of the conclusion of the Enquiry as an afterthought to the main discourse on the nature and efficacy of moral sentiment. He introduces the afterthought by saying:

> there remains nothing but briefly to consider our interested obligation to [virtue], and to inquire whether every man, who has any regard to his own happiness and welfare, will not best find his account in the practice of every moral duty (E, 278).

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[14]Also: "After [justice] is establish'd by these conventions, it is naturally attended with a strong sentiment of morals; which can proceed from nothing but our sympathy with the interests of society" (T, 579-580).

Here he clearly notes that an honest and ingenuous person will recognize, in contrast to the "sensible knave," that happiness is impossible without virtue.

Sensible knaves are persons who, recognizing the expedience of moral rules, generally obey them, but take advantage of any exceptions where disregarding the rule causes no significant harm to society, but brings about advantage to themselves (E, 282-83). The view that "virtue is its own reward" is easily understood and accepted by the honest and ingenuous person, and may be used in answer to the sensible knave who inquires whether there is any reason to obey a moral rule in the case that its disregard might be personally advantageous. The answer will not likely be convincing to dishonest knaves, who because of their defective natures, have lost the only true motive to virtue: moral approval and disapproval. Only those who have corrupted moral sentiments demand moral justification going beyond the simple recognition that something is wrong or right. However, it is the only answer available to such persons; it is the last resort we naturally pursue even realizing its limited convincing power. But our recourse to the insight that virtue is its own reward does not mean that we think that the desire to make ourselves happy is

the only sufficient motivation to act morally.[15] All the preceding chapters of the Enquiry, and large sections in the Treatise, are testimony to the contrary.

We may conclude that, based on Nagel's formulation of internalism which Brown adopts, Hume is undoubtedly an internalist after all. For he believes that moral sentiment both makes moral distinctions and provides for moral motivation. Nevertheless, as we saw, both Nagel, in his distinction between "rational" and "anti-rational" accounts of motivation, and Korsgaard have suggested another possible formulation of the internalist/externalist distinction according to which Hume would be classified as an externalist, where internalism is the view that reason is morally motivating, and externalism is the view that denies it. This is the version of the internalist/ externalist distinction adopted for study here under the label of "Rational Internalism." Therefore, we should turn now to an examination of Hume's arguments for reason's moral inefficacy.

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[15]Dorothy Coleman, in her unpublished paper "Placing Hume in the Internalist/Externalist Debate" makes this point nicely. See 6-7.

II

Hume and the Role of Reason in Morality

Hume's claim that "reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions" had an historical context. It was surely crafted to have a shock value for the moral philosophers of his time. His target was the moral rationalism espoused by such thinkers as Richard Cumberland, Ralph Cudworth, Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston. Each of these moral philosophers believed that distinctions between good and evil, between moral right or wrong, or between vice and virtue, are made on the basis of reason. Hume wanted to challenge this view.

Cumberland claimed that "the greatest good is the greatest end prescribed by reason."[16] Ralph Cudworth maintained that all things that are either naturally good or positively good are "such things as the intellectual nature obliges."[17] Samuel Clarke believed that moral obligation is based on "eternal and necessary differences of things" and that it is reason which determines what is right or fitting based on these differences. "Virtue and

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[16]Richard Cumberland, De Legibus Naturae, in British Moralists, ed., D. D. Raphael (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1969), 98.

[17]Ralph Cudworth, A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality, also in British Moralists, 109.

true goodness," he says, "are things so truly noble and excellent, so lovely and venerable in themselves, and do so necessarily approve themselves to the reason and consciences of men...."[18] And William Wollaston states: "...it is true that whatever will bear to be tried by right reason, is right; and that which is condemned by it wrong."[19] In Hume's judgment, all these thinkers had greatly exaggerated and distorted the role of reason in morality. But in fact Hume and these thinkers were not opposed in all respects.

The moral rationalists mentioned above share the common theses that there is moral good and evil, and that we can know what it is, independently of any particular social system. The impetus behind their work was the challenge put forth in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, who argued that "where there is no Common-wealth, there nothing is Unjust."[20] These rationalists were zealously attempting to defend the independent notions of good and evil, moral and immoral. They saw virtue and moral goodness as closely associated with the rational nature of human beings. The underlying thesis was twofold: first, that only rational

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[18]Samuel Clarke, A Discourse of Natural Religion, also in British Moralists 225; 237.

[19]William Wallaston, The Religion of Nature Delineated, in British Moralists, 292.

[20]Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 110-111.

beings could control their passions and appetites, and hence only rational beings could be responsible for their actions; and second, that such beings could know, by reason, good and bad, right and wrong, so as to guide their actions accordingly.

Now Hume unreservedly agreed with the moral rationalists on their two points of difference from Hobbes. He believed that there is moral goodness and virtue independently of any political system, and that we have knowledge concerning that morality. However, he went even further than his rationalist predecessors in his critique of Hobbes in pointing out that not only was the Hobbesian wrong in his ethical theory concerning the dependence of morality on social systems, but also about human psychology.

Hobbes portrayed human beings in their "natural condition" as self-centered, vain, aggressive, power-hungry, and indifferent towards the plight of others; capable of being subdued only by an awesome sovereign. In our natural condition, these selfish tendencies are neither virtuous nor vicious. No such appraisals apply to beings outside of a civil order. Hume's predecessors, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, had already introduced an entirely different vision of the human psyche. Human beings, according to their view, are not driven exclusively by self-interested motives, as Hobbes thought, but are motivated also by moral

sentiments--natural affections of sympathy and benevolence, not only towards our families, relatives, or loved ones, but even to strangers, at least towards those who are close enough to us to evoke our natural sympathy. Vice and virtue, moral goodness or evil, are regarded as a function of our natural affections. Thus, Shaftesbury states:

> We have found, that to deserve the name of good or virtuous a creature must have all his inclinations and affections, his dispositions of mind and temper, suitable, and agreeing with the good of his kind or of that system in which he is included, and of which he constitutes a PART. To stand thus well affected, and to have one's affections right and entire, not only in respect of oneself, but of society and the public: this is rectitude, integrity or virtue. And to be wanting of any of these, or to have their contraries, is depravity, corruption and vice.[21]

In rejecting Hobbesian psychology, the moral sentiment theorists emphasized the role of natural inclination in the virtuous life, something the moral rationalists had neglected. Hutcheson and Hume, however, did more than simply highlight the role of natural sentiment for morality: they criticized their rationalist predecessors for over-emphasizing the role of reason in morality. Hutcheson argued that reason was an inadequate guide in moral matters. He states:

> Notwithstanding the mighty reason we boast of above other animals, its processes are too slow, too full of doubt and hesitation, to serve us in

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[21]Lord Shaftesbury, An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit, in British Moralists, 205.

> every exigency, either for our own preservation, with the external senses, or to influence our actions for the good of the whole, without this moral sense.[22]

Indeed, Hume went so far as to say that "no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality," thus firmly excluding reason as a moral directive (T, 479). Although Hume admits that some actions are done merely from a sense of duty, he maintains that actions are really moral (or virtuous) only if there is a general human tendency to commit such actions. Accordingly, he claims that it is on the basis of a moral sense, rather than reason, that we approve or disapprove of actions, and thereby make moral distinctions. Only because we have natural inclinations for affection and sympathy can we recognize something as moral or immoral. Only because of our natural moral sentiments can we be moved to act morally. Even when we act for the sake of duty, our ability to act benevolently and to recognize benevolence as good depends upon "distinct principles" in human nature "whose moral beauty renders the action meritorious" (T, 479, emphasis added.) For Hume, then, like for Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, human beings lack virtue, and their actions lack morality, whenever it is the case that natural affections, towards ourselves, our families, and other

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[22]Hutcheson, Concerning Moral Good and Evil, 348.

human beings, are deficient. The further claim that only moral sentiments can make moral distinctions, and that only moral sentiments can motivate require further arguments concerning the inadequacies of reason in these respects.

It is interesting to note that Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume all speak of the loveliness or the beauty of morality and virtue, and the ugliness of their opposites.[23] The beauty of virtue and morality naturally instill us with a sense of pleasure, and attract us to them. It will be interesting later to contrast comments made by Kant on this head, but now I turn to Hume's specific arguments against the moral efficacy of reason.

In addition, then, to correcting the psychological deficiencies of the Hobbesian framework by pointing out natural tendencies in human nature for sympathy, thereby establishing the role of natural human sentiments in morality, Hume raises arguments to prove that reason plays a limited, and subservient role in ethics, both as a source for determining what is moral and as a motivator. Hume argues that reason can never, in and of itself, provide a motivating force for moral action. This conclusion is based on the basic premise that reason is that capacity by which we make judgments concerning truth or falsehood (T,

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[23]Shaftesbury calls virtue the "chief of all excellencies and beauties" 223; Hutcheson says that in the face of moral actions "we feel joy within us, admire the lovely action, and praise its author," 309.

458). Reason discovers truth or falsehood in either of two ways. He states:

> The understanding [reason] exerts itself after two different ways, as it judges from demonstration or probability; as it regards the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects, of which experience only gives us information (T, 413).

When reason is involved in demonstration, it is simply concerned with abstract relationships, that is logical relationships between ideas. Since demonstration has only to do with the relation of abstract ideas, it is a process by which we can arrive at certainty. Demonstrative reasoning includes mathematical, geometrical, and deductive reasoning. For instance, if I know that something is a triangle, I know that the sum of its angles is 180 degrees. Or if I know that all men are mortal, and Socrates is a man, then I know that Socrates is a mortal.

But, Hume says, demonstrative reasoning is completely removed from the world of "realities," in which our will is always placed; so demonstrative reasoning cannot by itself have any influence over the will (T, 414). While we may apply our abstract reasonings to actions in reality, we do so only because they are instrumental in determining cause-effect relationships. For instance, conclusions based on principles of arithmetic can be used by merchants to determine how best to handle their accounts; principles of geometry or physics can be used by architects in order to

ensure the construction of solid structures. But the abstract reasoning, by itself, is not motivating.

When reason judges from probability, it is simply concerned with causal relationships between our alternative actions and the "prospects of pain or pleasure" (T, 414). For example, if I want to have friends, I must restrain my selfish desires, since friends will object to either being ignored or used as instruments of my own desires. But this means that reason, by itself, has no autonomous influence or motivating power, but is dependent on ends or goals we naturally have. For without awareness of an end, reason cannot justify any action as a means to it, and awareness of ends is from our desires, not from reason itself.

Hume's argument, more formally, is the following:

1. Reason is the discoverer of truth or falsehood.
2. Reason discovers truth or falsehood either by judgments based on demonstration or probability.
3. Demonstration is concerned with abstract ideas.
4. Abstract ideas are outside of the real realm of human action.
5. The will only functions in the world of realities, in the realm of human action.
6. Therefore, the exercise of reason in demonstration does not itself motivate the will.
7. Probable judgments are concerned with cause-effect relationships.

8. But cause-effect relationships pertaining to human action are meaningless unless the end of the action is already specified; the end of human action is the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, ends we have by nature and experience in desire; so reasoning about such relationships depends on prior desires and ends.
9. Therefore, probable reasoning in itself does not motivate the will, but the will is motivated only by our natural desires. Probable reasoning, therefore, only extends this already experienced motivation from the end to a means.
10. Therefore, reason is never, in and of itself, motivating.

Moreover, since reason alone can never be the source of volition, neither can it prevent it. Our ends or goals are determined by our desires and passions, which are given by nature, not by reason. Consequently our passions can never properly be thought of as irrational either. Passions, described by Hume as "original existences," simply occur or exist. They cannot be thought of as contrary to reason anymore than an hallucination about pink elephants. Just as I cannot be mistaken that I imagine I see pink elephants (if I am imagining them), I cannot be <u>mistaken</u> about feeling anger, jealousy, greed, total indifference towards others, love or sympathy. Here Hume is making the point that Descartes makes in his

Meditations, that only judgments, but not feelings or desires or perceptions, can be erroneous, that is, contrary to the truth. Thus, a particular passion could only be irrational if it was directly based on a false belief about things, or if we were moved to something as a means, but it was in fact an "insufficient means" to satisfy our end (T, 416). These views explain Hume's notorious claim that:

> 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. 'Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an Indian, or person wholly unknown to me. 'Tis as little contrary to reason to prefer even my own acknowledg'd lesser good to my greater, and have a more ardent affection for the former than the latter (T, 416).

Hume may well be directing this claim specifically against William Wollaston, who identifies morality with truth, and immorality with falsehood.[24] Hume argues that upon reflection, this view is entirely anti-intuitive. Truth and falsehood do not admit of degrees. If virtue and morality were thought of merely as a species of truth, and vice and immorality of falsehood, then all vices would be equally vicious; and all virtues equally virtuous (T, 460). Since we recognize a vast spectrum of degrees of both vice

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[24]A characteristic passage is the following: "No act (whether word or deed) of any being, to whom moral good and evil are imputable, that interferes with any true proposition, or denies any thing to be as it is, can be right" (The Religion of Nature Delineated, 280). Hume's criticisms of Wollaston overlap on criticisms of him raised by Hutcheson. See Illustrations Upon the Common Sense, 360-362, 368.

and virtue, such judgments of degree must be based on some other criterion besides truth or falsehood.

In any case, Hume is rejecting the moral rationalists' views that it is reason which gives us the capacity to make moral determinations, and that reason is therefore also motivating to moral action. Morality clearly has an influence on our actions, of course. But since reason alone is impotent in regard to motivation, because all motivation ultimately springs from passions which select the ends of our actions, and since the passions can never in themselves be irrational, it follows that reason must be considered subservient to the passions.

To put the same point in different terms, the work of reason is simply "the discovery of truth and falsehood" But morality cannot be understood in these terms. We recognize actions as good or bad, praiseworthy or blameworthy, but never as true or false. When reason discovers truths, if we are so indifferent to those truths in our passions that we experience no "desire or aversion" with regard to them, then reason's discovery of them lacks any influential power (E, 172). Thus, reason can determine which means are probably the most effective for attaining any particular end, and it can judge, by demonstration, whether or not there is "agreement or disagreement" between our judgments or between our abstract ideas. But this is all it can do. So, restricted to these functions, reason

could never by itself determine what is moral or immoral, nor produce any motivation by itself either to act morally or to refrain from acting immorally.

In addition to these, Hume gives several further arguments for the motivational inefficacy of reason. Noting that the moral rationalists believed that morality can be discovered by rational deduction, Hume counters that morality cannot be analyzed into any of the types of relations which are subject to demonstration. For, he says, anything subject to demonstration has to do with the relations of "resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportions in quantity and number" (T, 464). But these are not moral relations, as is clear from the fact that all of these types of relations pertain not just to our actions or volitions, but to inanimate objects as well. Furthermore, even if it were true that morality consisted in some kind of relations which are immutable, natural or fitting, and accessible to reason and its powers of demonstration, it would still have to be the case that such activities of reason would have some kind of effect on the human will. He states:

> 'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it. In order, therefore, to prove, that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, obligatory on every rational mind, 'tis not sufficient to shew the relations upon which they are founded: We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and must prove that this connexion is so necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, it

> must take place and have its influence....(T, 465)

In other words, even if we could define morality in terms of certain necessary and eternal, natural and fitting relationships known by reason in its demonstrative capacity, we would still have to show that human beings, at least if not defective or uncivilized, are naturally moved to action by the knowledge (by reason) of these moral relations. Hume uses the example of parricide (T, 467). There is a parallel relationship between a person killing their parent and a sapling of an oak tree which kills its parent tree by outgrowing it. The relationships in the two sets of events are parallel; yet we feel outrage and disapprobation only towards the human offspring. The moral "turpitude" then, clearly is not an aspect of the relations involved in the act of parricide, and hence, not something discovered by reason. The moral turpitude is discovered by means of our natural moral sentiments.

Suppose it were suggested that morality is discovered by reason not through demonstration, but through empirical, probable judgments of some matter of fact. Hume argues that the same reflection still holds: reason cannot discover vice in any matter of fact. The matters of fact in an act of parricide will be that an offspring experiences certain passions such as anger or jealousy, or perhaps does not experience natural affections, or that the offspring has certain intentions or motives. But the vice

in parricide cannot be found in any of these "matters of fact." It can only be found when you "turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation" (T, 469).

This, then, is Hume's case for casting reason into the role of the "slave". Every act of determining what is morally correct depends (for its moral content and for its motivational force) on what is in "our breasts" and not on what reasons can tell us independently of that. This is why he says that morality "is more properly felt than judg'd of" (T, 470).

It is not surprising then, that Hume claims that those who think that reason makes moral determinations have confused the operations of reason with the passions. Those without a "strict philosophical eye," who judge from "first view and appearance," have a tendency to attribute moral perception to reason. They are misled because some passions are "calm" and are experienced with the same tranquillity as the judgments of reason. What they tend to think of as judgments of reason are really effects of our calm passions. These calm passions include "instincts originally planted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, consider'd merely as such" (T, 417).

But the calmness of a passion should not be confused with its weakness, because a calm passion can, in fact, successfully override a violent one. Indeed, Hume says, what we call "strength of mind" is actually "the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent" (T, 419).[25] Our resistance to immediate temptations which contradict our more long-term or persistent goals, or to self-interested temptations which contradict our natural feelings of sympathy towards others, is also ultimately an effect of our calm passions, rather than of reason (T, 418).

Are we to conclude that reason, for Hume, has no significant role in morality? This might seem a natural conclusion, given Hume's emphasis on the role of moral sentiment in morality. But nevertheless it is a distortion of his views. For Hume's discussion of the possibility of acting out of a sense of duty is based on a recognition that we do not always experience natural affections when we should. His discussion of justice as an artificial virtue recognizes that our natural feelings of sympathy are not always vivacious enough to secure a stable social order. Hume's position is that it is always our passions, sometimes strong and sometimes calm, which are the source for moral determinations, provide motivation, and ultimately determine our will. But he also recognizes, in

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[25]See also E, 196.

the two cases mentioned, the necessity of reason in order to evoke the appropriate passions. He states:

> But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained (E, 137).

Just as our appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of the fine arts is to a great extent dependent on our intellectual appreciation of it, so moral beauty and significance is often only perceived after much intellectual preparation. Reason makes distinctions between different situations, between valid and invalid arguments; it draws comparisons between ourselves and others, it notes the relations and effects of our actions, and discovers facts and their relevance. The possibility of a moral life, Hume acknowledges, depends on these processes of reason. Without these processes of reason we would often act erroneously, from the point of view of morality, either by failing to do something that is a duty, or considering ourselves obliged to do something we really are not obliged to do. Reason, then, plays no inconsiderable role in Hume's full account of morality. But because of Hume's aim of correcting both the Hobbesian psychology and the mistakes of the rationalists, the role of reason receives very little explicit attention within

Hume's ethical works. In the words of a noted Hume scholar:

> Thus, while it is true that Hume gives to sentiment the central role in founding morals, it is also true that he gives to reason an essential part in morals. Not even in morals does Hume thoroughly subordinate reason to sentiment in any but the highly restricted sense of subordination outlined in Treatise II, 3, 3: If I do not have a desire for an object, reason cannot cause in the will an impulse toward--desire for--that object. And if I do have a desire, reason cannot in any direct sense eliminate that desire by blocking the impulse of the will. But reason can and does modify our desires, it can and does modify our sentiments, and it plays sometimes a crucial role in the formation of our moral sentiments.[26]

Hume's position, then, is not that reason plays no significant role in morality, but only that it cannot alone either make moral determinations or provide for moral motivation. While he forthrightly states that reason alone cannot make moral judgements, he also implies that sentiments alone cannot do the job either.

By way of both comparison and contrast, we now turn to a parallel examination of Kant's rational internalism. Why does Kant say that only reason can make moral judgments, and how is it that reason provides for moral motivation? After giving Kant's answers to these questions as a paradigmatic Rational Internalist, we will be able to evaluate the challenge Hume presents to rational internalism.

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[26]David Fate Norton, 101.

III

Kant's Moral Rationalism

Far from placing reason in any subordinate role, Kant claims that reason and reason only determines what is moral, and that actions which have "true moral worth" are those which have been motivated by reason alone. In the Preface to his Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals Kant explains why he thinks that it is absolutely necessary to show that the basis of moral obligation is reason alone. His task is to "construct a pure moral philosophy, perfectly cleared of everything which is only empirical, and which belongs to anthropology" (FP, 5). He gives two reasons why this task is of utmost importance. The first reason is that he thinks it is the only way to explain what he takes to be a fact of our moral experience: we all know what it is like to experience the moral force of obligation. But the force of moral obligation, he holds, can be properly explained only in terms of its necessity. He states: "Everyone must admit that if a law is to have moral force, that is, to be the basis of an obligation, it must carry with it absolute necessity...."

(FP, 5). Kant claims that the necessity of moral obligation, like the necessity of causal relationships, can only be understood in light of the a priori structure of reason. Just as the necessity of causal connections cannot be discovered empirically (because all we experience is the constant conjunction of two events, but never the causal connection), neither can the necessity of moral obligation. The necessity of causal relationships and of moral obligations can only be explained by the formal nature of reason.

The second reason for the importance of a "pure moral philosophy" is that morals are especially prone to "corruption." Without awareness of their true normative principle, it is much more likely that either we will fail to adhere to moral obligation, or that we will be led into error in our moral judgments. Any reliance on anything empirical, even if it concerns something that is in "certain respects universal," will fail to provide a secure guideline for morality. Kant's moral philosophy must constantly be understood with reference to his task of providing a basis for the phenomenological experience of the universal binding force of moral obligation. Focussing on this task is necessary for a proper perspective for interpreting Kant's ethical works, especially the Fundamental Principles and the Critique of Practical Reason.

The dual role of reason as moral determinator and moral motivator is crucial for Kant's enterprise. His view is that if reason could determine what is moral but not yet motivate, then moral obligation would be dependent on some other motivator, which may or may not be present. And if reason could motivate but not determine what is moral, then there would be no essential connection between the recognition of morality and the obligation to act accordingly. So either if reason could make moral determinations and yet not motivate, or if reason could motivate and yet not make moral determinations, there would be no accounting for the necessity of moral obligation. Thus, Kant, in his search for an adequate "foundation" for morality, must establish that reason functions in both ways.

Kant's starting point for the discovery of the "foundations" of morality is what he sees as a universal fact of our moral experience, the feeling of constraint by a moral obligation, and his project is to analyze and explain how that experience is possible. His methodology requires that he focuses, then, on what Hume would regard as a rather narrow aspect of our moral experience: the experience of knowing that we have a moral obligation when either we have no inclination to fulfill it, or we have inclinations which conflict with the fulfillment of duty. The examination of this kind of moral experience will shed

light on the essence of a good will. An understanding of the nature of the good will, Kant claims, will lead to the discovery of the conditions of the possibility of morality. Kant distinguishes three categories of actions pertaining to morality: those which are inconsistent with duty, those which are done (merely) in accordance with duty, and those which are done for the sake of duty. Actions which are inconsistent with duty certainly do not shed light on the nature of the good will. Actions done merely in accordance with duty are motivated by self-interest, natural inclination or desire. While such actions have "legality," Kant says that these also are not the kind of actions which illuminate the nature of the good will. They do not illuminate the nature of the good will because they rest on a contingent basis. They do not have the kind of basis which can account for the universality and necessity of moral obligation. So Kant focuses on the types of action in which he thinks the good will is most obvious: those which are done for the sake of duty. Only actions done for the sake of duty embody the characteristic necessity and universality Kant is seeking to explain. Kant reserves the appellation of "true moral worth" only for the actions which are done for the sake of duty, because only these actions reflect the elements of the foundation of morality: freedom and autonomy.

Actions which are done solely for the sake of duty, and which therefore are said to have true moral worth, can not be performed on the basis of hypothetical commands. Rather, such actions are performed on the basis of the categorical imperative: Act only in such a way that the maxim of your action could become a universal law of nature. This principle is a "formal practical principle of pure reason" and the only appropriate determining ground of an absolutely good will. It is, Kant claims, the only true normative principle of morality.

An absolutely good will is one which is autonomous, that is, ungoverned by heteronomous desires. The autonomous will is guided by the purely formal character of universalizability; and Kant's view is that reason alone can test the universalizability of a maxim (which he defines as a "subjective principle of action"). We need to understand why Kant claims that the test for universalizability can be provided only by reason, because this is what is required to establish reason as a "moral determinator." The answer is given in two parts, which I will review consecutively. First, Kant gives an indirect defense of his claim by showing the inadequacies of alternative bases for morality. Secondly, he gives a direct defense of his claim by showing that only reason can determine universalizability.

Kant identifies alternative principles of morality that have been suggested in the history of ethics, and compares them unfavorably with his own. As opposed to the formal principle of the categorical imperative, which is principle possible for the autonomous will, the other principles are "material" and determined by heteronomous will. They include both "empirical" and "rational" principles. Empirical principles, including the principles of self-love and moral feeling, are completely and obviously inadequate, and the rational (but material) principles of perfection, or the will of God, are also, but less obviously, "spurious."

To begin with the empirical principles, Kant claims that the principle of self-love, or of private happiness, is by its nature completely contrary to morality. He states: "So distinct and sharp are the boundaries between morality and self-love that even the commonest eye cannot fail to distinguish whether a thing belongs to the one or the other" (CPrR, 37). The complete inadequacy of self-love as a principle of morality is based on the fact that self-love actually "undermines morality" by "driving it to ruin" and "destroying its sublimity" (FP, 59; CPrR, 36). Kant is calling attention to the common experience that self-love is a motive which often conflicts with moral obligation. So the principle of self-love destroys the sublimity of morality by "putting the motives to virtue and

to vice in the same class." If self-love can lead us to foresake our duty, it certainly cannot guarantee adherence to moral principle. Kant's appeal here works successfully against a simple-minded egoist, but is not strong enough for a more sophisticated theory of self-love or egoism.

The second empirical moral principle Kant identifies is the principle of moral feeling. Kant explicitly mentions Hutcheson in the context of the discussion of moral feeling, and one expects that his criticisms would apply also to Hume, since his views on moral feeling are consistent with his predecessor's, in that they both believe that it is moral sentiment that determines what is moral and that provides the motivation to be moral.[27] Here I will simply explain Kant's reasons for rejecting moral sense theories, and reserve an evaluation of his reasons for the last section.

Kant judges the principle of moral feeling to be "more refined" than the principle of private happiness, and even "nearer to morality and its dignity" (CPrR, 40) because:

> ...it pays virtue the honor of ascribing to her immediately the satisfaction and esteem we have for her, and does not, as it were, tell her to her face that we are not attached to her by her beauty but by profit (FP, 59).

Nevertheless, for Kant, moral sense cannot be the basis of moral obligation. Four reasons are offered:

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[27]The reference to Hutcheson occurs in the Fundamental Principles, 59n.

The first is that moral sense cannot provide the basis for moral obligation because moral sense is a feeling, and "feelings which naturally differ infinitely in degree cannot furnish a uniform standard of good and evil" (FP, 59). The second reason is that since the moral sense theorists believe that the natural response to morality and virtue is pleasure, and the natural response to immorality and vice is pain, then "everything is reduced to the desire for one's own happiness" (CPrR, 40). Kant seems here to be saying that for the moral sense theorist, people really act morally in order to secure their own happiness after all.

Based on the presumption that it is true that the moral sense theorist believes that people act only in view of their own happiness, the third reason is that moral sense cannot be the basis of moral judgment because we do not always see our own happiness as a consequence of that of others. Kant does not in fact object to having the happiness of others as an end, a point of which utilitarian or universal consequentialists should take note. He says outrightly: "The happiness of others may be the object of the will of a rational being...." (CPrR, 35) His objection is that moral feeling cannot provide the basis of a moral obligation, or be the "determining ground of the maxim" because we simply cannot presume that all people, at all times, experience the appropriate moral sentiments. He states:

> Not only would one have to presuppose that we find in the welfare of others a natural satisfaction but also one would have to find a want such as that which is occasioned in some men by a sympathetic disposition. This want, however, I cannot presuppose in every rational being, certainly not in God (CPrR, 35).

We simply are not moved by sympathy in every instance we ought to be, and we do not always find satisfaction in the welfare of others. Thus, in Kant's view, moral sense theories cannot account for the necessity of moral obligation.

Kant's fourth reason for denying that moral sense could be a basis of moral obligation is that those who do respond sympathetically, experiencing pleasure in the face of virtue and pain in the face of vice, must have a prior appreciation of what is morally good, and must already be virtuous. The consciousness of moral obligation, Kant believes, is experienced, not only by the virtuous, but by everyone. So he concludes: "Therefore, the concept of morality and duty must precede all reference to this satisfaction and cannot be derived from it" (CPrR, 40). He in no way wants to deny, nor to belittle, the importance of such a subjective feeling of satisfaction in the performance of one's moral obligations. In fact, as we have seen earlier, he urges that this is a feeling that we ought to cultivate, indeed, that its cultivation is a duty (CPrR, 40). He only wants to insist that it cannot itself

tell us what our duty is, nor can it provide a dependable motivating source.

The rational, but material, moral principles are ranked by Kant as higher and closer to morality than the empirical material principles. The rational principles include the notion of God's will (adopted in the divine command theory of morality) and the notion of perfection. God's will cannot serve as a basis for morality, Kant says, first, because it is impossible for us to have any comprehension or intuition of God's perfection by which to make our moral judgments. Secondly, if we attribute to God the character of infinite goodness, we can deduce moral obligations only on the basis of our own ideas of goodness, whose basis we are in fact trying to identify (and Kant believes are discoverable only through the categorical imperative); but if we do not attribute to God the character of infinite goodness, then we are left only with a God of "glory and dominion" whose prescriptions may well be contrary to morality.

The notion of perfection also cannot provide a basis for morality. "Being empty and indefinite," Kant says, "it inevitably tends to turn in a circle an cannot avoid tacitly presupposing the morality which it is to explain" (FP, 59). So, this criticism is actually the same as the one raised against divine command theories; we need to already have a criterion of goodness in order to know that

God's will is what ought to be done, and we need to already have a criterion of moral goodness in order to have an adequate grasp of what perfection is.

Proceeding now to the second, more constructive part of Kant's defense of his claim that only reason can be the determining ground of morality, we need to examine the process of determining universalizability, the criterion of moral goodness, the "canon of the moral appreciation" (FP, 41). His starting point, we have seen, is that the inescapable experience of the force of moral obligation can only be understood in terms of the a priori character of morality, that is, in terms of a directive for action having universality and necessity. The good will, i.e. a will conforming solely to this directive, is therefore determined by the mere form of the moral law. The form of the moral law is precisely its universalizability. In order to determine the morality of any maxim or subjective principle, then, the maxim must be tested for this universality.

Kant identifies two tests for universalizability: 1) a maxim cannot be universalized if it contains a contradiction which has the effect of undermining the possibility of society and 2) a maxim cannot be universalized if its maxim, when universalized, brings the will into contradiction with its own nature. Of course, anything that undermines the possibility of society also

brings the will into conflict with itself, given our intrinsically social natures. This suggests, perhaps, that the second criterion is a sufficient criterion of morality.[28] In any case, maxims must be tested for the presence of contradiction. But it is reason, and reason alone, that identifies contradiction; from this it follows that reason is the sole determining ground of morality. Since universalizability, which is based on the absence of contradiction in our maxims, or between our maxims and the nature of our wills, is a purely formal notion, judgments concerning universalizability can only be made by reason.

Now that we have examined what it means for Kant to say that reason, and reason only, determines what is moral, we can turn our attention to the claim that reason also is the source of a purely moral motivation. Kant argues that it would be impossible for him to demonstrate how it is that the moral law can be motivating, for this would be the same as showing how freedom is possible (FP, 76; CPrR, 48). We can't prove that the awareness of duty is motivating, anymore than we can prove that we are free. Nevertheless,

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[28]Notice that a maxim for making a promise without the intention of keeping it violates not only the first, but also the second, criterion. This shows that Kant's second example can be shown to be immoral in light of the second criterion as well. To pursue the suggestion that the second criterion may be a sufficient one would take the discussion too far afield.

we must assume that we are free in order to make sense out of morality. Kant states:

> [Freedom] holds good only as a necessary hypothesis of reason in a being that believes itself conscious of a will, that is a faculty distinct from mere desire (namely, a faculty of determining itself to action as an intelligence, in other words, by laws of reason independently of natural instincts) (FP, 76).

Kant is saying that the consciousness of the moral law (consciousness of the necessity of moral obligation) shows in itself that freedom is not only possible, but actual (CPrR, 49). The concept of freedom is derived from the consciousness of the moral law. Freedom means being able to act independently of heteronomous desires, and on the basis of moral judgments, which are made by reason. Freedom must be presupposed, Kant says, in order to account for the awareness of a moral obligation. Thus, Kant gives a "transcendental deduction" or an a priori proof of reason's motivating power.

Having given this transcendental proof of reason's motivational influence, Kant proceeds to discuss in detail "in what way" that motivational influence is experienced (CPrR, 75). While rejecting the ideas that only sentiments of sympathy or of moral approval are moral motivators, Kant nevertheless does have his own theory of "moral feeling". Kant introduces the notion of moral feeling, or Achtung in the Fundamental Principles and devotes a chapter of the analytic in the Critique of Practical Reason to it. In

these works, and especially in the latter, Kant can be seen as redefining moral feeling; that is, giving an account of it that differs from his "moral sense" predecessors.

However, Kant's discussion of the role of Achtung, the feeling of respect for the moral law, seems to raise a serious difficulty for the interpretation of Kant as a Rational Internalist. "It seems possible," Nagel comments, "that Kant's postulation of moral interest as the motivating impulse for phenomenal moral behavior compromised the effort" to establish moral reasons as themselves the independent source of moral motivation (PA, 11). Mark Timmons, in a recent article, argues that Kant's positing of a mysterious, a priori feeling (Achtung) was indeed superfluous and merely symptomatic of his unreflective Aristotelian heritage, and that if Kant could have liberated himself from that influence, he would have expostulated an account of morality similar to Nagel's.[29] Timmons thus suggests that Kant did in fact "compromise the effort" to give an account of ethics which shows that reason itself is the source of moral motivation. E. J. Bond, who rejects Nagel's Rational Internalism, states: "But even Kant recognized that some motivational factor was necessary to account for being moved to act on moral

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[29]Mark Timmons, "Kant and the Possibility of Moral Motivation," Southern Journal of Philosophy (1985, vol. 23, No. 3): 377-398.

grounds, beyond the mere recognition of the law, and he called that "reverence" or "respect" for the law."[30] The comments on the part of these writers point to a possible inconsistency in Kant's works. Is reason independently motivating or is it not? Since the criticism raised by these commentators puts Kant's Rational Internalism into question, and since Kant has been identified as a "paradigmatic" Rational Internalist, it is important to clarify the role that moral feeling has in morality.

The most significant way in which Kant's moral feeling differs from previous accounts is that for him, moral feeling, or respect for the moral law, is "produced solely by reason" (CPrR, 79). Although moral feeling is produced by reason, we experience this respect for the moral law as a result of our dual natures. God would not experience moral feeling, because God has no sensuous nature, and thus, nothing which comes into conflict with reason. He states: "Respect for the law cannot be attributed to a supreme being or even to one free from all sensibility, since to such a being there could be no obstacle to practical reason" (CPrR, 79).

Kant proceeds to describe the ways in which the motivational influence is experienced, phenomenologically, as it were. He speaks of these experiences as the

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[30]E. J. Bond, Reason and Value (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 11.

"subjective effects" of the moral law. By "subjective" effects, Kant does not mean effects which vary according to individuals, but simply effects of the moral law which are experienced on the part of the subject. He regards these subjective effects as necessary, given our dual natures.

Perhaps the most significant subjective effect of the moral law is the awareness of our autonomy, or of our "supersensuous" existence--in short, the awareness of our intrinsic worth. For Kant, we become aware of our "supersensuous" nature in the consciousness of our independence from natural influences and of our freedom to act according to universal laws which are self-imposed. This is the consciousness of our distinctive natures as rational beings. It is the consciousness of the sublimity of our natures (CPrR, 91).

Kant speaks of the negative subjective effect of pain which is the necessary result of the conflict of the moral law with our natural inclinations. The moral law is experienced as something which checks our natural inclinations and desires, and hence is the source of pain and humiliation (CPrR, 75). The negative effects can be known a priori. Kant states: "we can see a priori that the moral law as a ground of determination of the will, by thwarting all our inclinations, must produce a feeling which can be called pain" (CPrR, 75). The negative effects "awaken" the feeling of respect for the moral law. Respect

is the positive "subjective effect" of that motivation. Since the moral law humbles, it must at the same time evoke respect for itself; there can be no humiliation except in the face of something which is the object of respect. In a sense, the experience of respect is primary, because it is only in the face of this respect that the negative effects of pain and humiliation can be felt.

Kant speaks of yet another way in which the moral law is experienced. We experience a sense of pleasure when we have in fact overcome our inclination and have fulfilled our duty (FP, 77). Kant argues that since we are sensual beings, it must be possible for the moral law to exercise itself in this way.

It may be illuminating to consider the effects of the moral law on the holy will. The holy will is the one which is unaffected by sensuous desires and completely from inclination. (God has a holy will, and virtuous human beings strive to have one.) Reason, in the form of the moral law, would be motivating for the holy will without hindrance. The holy will then would not respond to the moral law with pain. Pain is felt only because the human (unholy) will experiences inclinations which conflict with the moral law. So the subjective effects of the moral law, whether pain or respect or the feeling of worth, are as they are because of our dual natures as beings who on the one hand are subject to natural laws, and on the other

hand, subject to laws which they impose on themselves through reason.

Let's turn now to the suggestion that Kant's inclusion of a discussion of moral feeling compromises his rational internalism by contradicting the claim that reason only is motivating. Suppose we interpret Kant, as Nagel, Timmons, and Bond have done, as saying that it is the respect for the moral law, rather than reason itself, which motivates moral action. The first problem with this interpretation is that if indeed it is the case that respect for the moral law is produced and thus is entirely dependent on reason, then it is reason which ultimately motivates. The subjective effects are the results of the already motivating power of reason in the form of the moral law. (Since Kant speaks of the moral feeling as the effect of the moral law on the subject, we can speak of reason producing moral feeling.)

Secondly, the interpretation jars with repeated claims made by Kant to the contrary. Properly speaking, Kant seems to say, it is not respect which motivates moral action; it is rather reason in the form of the moral law which motivates. In the Critique of Practical Reason he states: "...the moral incentive of the human will, can never be anything other than the moral law" (CPrR, 74). Kant specifically excludes respect as the incentive or motivational influence: "Thus respect for the law is not

the incentive to morality: It is morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive..."(CPrR, 78). He refers to the pure moral law as the "sole and undoubted moral incentive" (CPrR, 81) and claims that the "genuine incentive" of pure practical reason is "nothing else than the pure moral law itself...." (CPrR, 91) Further, Kant speaks of the "immediate determination of the will by the [moral] law" (FP, 19) and he says that the influence of the moral law is "by way of reason alone" (FP, 28). These passages show that we should not think of the feeling of the respect for the moral law as the incentive for morality, or even as a cause of moral motivation. The feeling of respect, for Kant, is the result of the already motivating power of reason. It refers to the way we experience the moral law as motivating.

Kant's identifying the moral law as the "sole and undoubted" moral incentive does not conflict with our conclusions in addressing Prior's criticism of Kant in Chapter 4. There I showed that for Kant there are "incentives" to moral conduct other than reason. Passages were cited to indicate that for Kant feelings of sympathy and benevolence are an important part of our moral lives. But there I was using the word "moral" in its common, everyday sense, and not in the limited, strict sense in which Kant uses it. For Kant, there are many incentives for "moral" actions--if by moral we mean actions that are

morally correct; actions which have "legality". But there is only one genuine incentive for "moral" actions in the strict sense--that is, for those that have true moral worth.

The careful examination of Kant's discussion of moral feeling, then, reveals no inconsistency in his claim that reason is an independently motivating power. We are justified in concluding that Kant's discussion of the role of moral feeling as the respect for the moral law in no way compromises his Rational Internalism, but rather is entirely consistent with it.

Kant obviously must have felt that his ethical works would have been incomplete without a discussion of the moral feeling of respect, since he introduces the notion in his Fundamental Principles and develops the notion so extensively in the more mature Second Critique. The discussion would not, however, been incomplete in the sense that without moral feeling there would be no incentive for morality; but only in the sense that its treatment of the psychology of morality would have been incomplete. There would have been no account of the subjective effects of the already motivating influence of reason in the form of the moral law. Kant's ethical works should not be faulted for including the discussion of the moral feeling of respect, for its inclusion adds to the richness of the account and coheres with important elements of our moral experience.

We do feel pain when we ought to do something which conflicts with our inclinations to do otherwise, and we do feel respect for the dictates of morality.

In conclusion, then, the inclusion of the discussion of Kant's moral feeling, the respect for the moral law, does nothing to undermine the claim that reason is itself motivating. Overall, I have attempted to render a sympathetic account of both Kant and Hume's position on the role of reason in ethics in order to provide a solid preparation for a comparison of their views, and for a critical evaluation of Hume's challenge to rational internalism.

IV

Evaluation of Hume's Challenge

A comparison of the moral theories of Hume and Kant reveals agreement on the following essential points: they both are moral realists, that is, they both believe that morality is objective and that there are moral truths; they both believe that we have access to moral knowledge; and they both believe that morality is universal (at least in some sense). Further, they both believe that we can act for the sake of duty, and they both call our attention to

the beauty of the sympathetic disposition and the natural satisfaction of the moral life. Finally, they both recognize that the natural feelings of sympathy can differ significantly in degree, both between persons, and within the same person at different times.

The comparison also reveals that Kant's criticisms of moral sense theorists are not truly applicable to Hume, and that some of Hume's criticisms of the moral rationalists are not truly applicable to Kant.[31] In the last section, I identified four criticisms of the moral sense theorists given by Kant.[32] Kant's first criticism is that the moral sense theories must be false because moral commands are necessary, but moral feelings "differ infinitely in degree." But Hume does not think of moral sentiments as varying. He thinks of them rather as universal, necessary responses of all but the most uncivilized and corrupt spirits, capable of providing the basis of a universal standard of morality. Our feelings of compassion and pity may vary tremendously, but our moral sentiments of approval or disapproval are stable.

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[31]I do not think that Kant's criticisms apply to Hutcheson either, the moral sense theorist Kant probably had foremost in mind. Since we are concentrating on the differences (apparent or real) between Kant and Hume, I will restrict my attention only to showing that the criticisms do not apply to Hume.

[32]See 194-196.

Kant's second criticism is that moral sense theories reduce morality to the desire for one's own happiness insofar as they speak of moral approval and disapproval in terms of pleasure and pain. But while it is true that Hume says that we do experience pleasure in view of moral actions and moral characters, and pain in view of immoral ones, he does not say that we always act in order to experience pleasure or avoid pain. The third criticism is that moral sense theories presuppose that moral actions are always done out of a sense of sympathy. But, as I have argued, Hume does not claim that all our moral actions have to be inspired by active feelings of sympathy within the moral agent. He allows that even in the absence of sympathy or compassion, I can recognize an obligation and be motivated to do it simply out of a sense of duty. The fourth criticism is that moral sense theories presuppose a virtuous disposition, because only the virtuous respond sympathetically to others and take pleasure in moral actions, but this response depends on the prior recognition of what is morally good. As I have suggested, this criticism is unfair. Hume is right that moral motivation is more likely to be present in an already virtuous person, but he does not say that only virtuous persons can experience moral motivation. All but the most uncivilized can recognize, through moral approbation, that something is a duty.

Some of Hume's criticisms of the moral rationalists apply just as weakly to Kant's Rational Internalism. Hume says that if reason is the discovery of truth and falsehood, and if morality is determined by reason, then all virtuous acts would be equally good and all vicious acts would be equally bad, since truth and falsehood are not matters of degree. He also claimed that if vice or virtue were to be discovered in some relation, discoverable by reason, that vice and virtue would be attributes not only of human beings, but of animals and even inanimate objects.

Kant avoids these conclusions by freeing reason from the limited task of discovering truth and falsehood, and by showing that the relations or the contradictions which are immoral are not just any contradictions or relations, but those which, when expressed in maxims, contain contradictions which undermine the possibility of society, or contain contradictions between the maxim and the nature of the will. While the same relation exists between a sapling and a tree and between a child and a parent, the immorality, or vice, of ingratitude pertains only to the latter relationship, because only rational beings are capable of formulating maxims, and of testing their universalizability. Only human beings naturally desire evidence of gratitude; only they can realize that a contrary maxim brings their will into conflict with itself.

For Kant, degrees of immorality or of vice are explained in terms of how flagrantly a person's maxims, when universalized, undermine the possibility of society or are conflicting with their own natures.

Since these criticisms refer to merely apparent differences between Kant and Hume, we have yet to identify the real differences between them, in particular, with regard to their theories of moral motivation. From the beginning I have proposed that the differences between Kant and Hume can be explained in large part in light of the differences in their emphases. Hume's focus was determined largely by his rejection of Hobbesian psychology of human beings as essentially egocentric. His focus is very broad, covering all aspects of our moral or virtuous lives--whatever we find amiable, pleasing, or praiseworthy in human conduct. For Hume, actions done out of a sense of duty constitute both a small portion of our moral or virtuous lives (a point I believe Kant could readily admit) and an exceptional rather than paradigmatic portion. Hume's discussion of actions done out of a sense of duty is brief, and his estimation of them is that both such actions, and the persons who commit them, are lacking in qualities we naturally admire. The actions, and the persons, are deprived of the beauty attending actions which result directly from our natural inclinations for benevolence and sympathy.

Kant's focus on the other hand is, in comparison, very narrow. Because his question was how moral judgments, and hence morality, are possible, he set for himself the task of analyzing the kind of moral experience that he thought would best enable him to answer this question: the experience of feeling the force of moral obligation. We feel the force of moral obligation most clearly when we either lack the inclination to act morally, or when we have inclinations which are contrary to the fulfillment of moral obligation. In either of these situations, in other words, when we act morally, we do so for the sake of duty only. Through his analysis of actions which are done because (and only because) duty requires, Kant identifies the aspects of human nature that make us moral beings. In the phenomena of acting for the sake of duty Kant identifies the existential conditions of our moral lives as autonomy and rationality. Kant agrees that the naturally sympathetic disposition is <u>beautiful</u> to behold (<u>CPrR</u>, 85); that the sympathetic disposition deserves praise and encouragement (<u>FP</u>, 15-16); and that there is a satisfaction found in acting morally (<u>CPrR</u>, 40). But rather than viewing the actions done for the sake of duty as deficient, Kant sees in them the clearest reflection of human dignity. Human beings have dignity because we are capable of morality; we are capable of morality because we can give ourselves categorical imperatives, because we are free and rational.

A sympathetic nature is beautiful, but the power we have to act independently of our inclinations is sublime (FP, 59; CPrR, 89).

Their difference of focus is reflected in the amount of attention they each devote to the phenomenon of acting for the sake of duty, and in the way this phenomenon is analyzed. But despite the difference of emphasis on this point, we may think of them as giving to a great extent, complementary, rather than contradictory, accounts of ethical life: I think that it must be admitted that Kant is right in his intuition that actions done for the sake of duty are somehow remarkable or special even while agreeing with Hume that these actions are not the ones that are characteristic of moral life. And I think that Hume's description of the virtuous person as the one who acts out of naturally sympathetic inclinations is very much in keeping with common intuitions, and that Hume is correct in pointing out the important and pervasive role that sympathy plays in our moral lives. I do not believe, however, that therein lie the essential differences between Kant and Hume, especially for our question, the question of whether reason is motivating. I propose that a closer examination of their respective analyses of action done for the sake of duty will be instrumental in highlighting the essential differences between their theories of moral motivation.

us, even if imperceptibly, a calm passion, for instance, of benevolence or of moral approval that is causing us to act (instead of our reasoned judgment about duty)? Are we to believe that all that is going on in the mind prior to actions done out of a sense of duty is a confrontation of "calm" and "violent" passions?

This interpretation seems supported in the passage in which Hume claims that what we (those of us who do "not examine objects with a strict philosophic eye") often imagine are judgments of reason, are really nothing other than the effects of the calm passions. We confuse them because the calm passions, like reason, exert themselves "without producing any sensible emotion." (T, 417). On this interpretation, then, when we act out of regard for a moral obligation, it is not really reason but a "calm passion" which ultimately motivates our actions. But we don't recognize the influence of the calm passions because they are faint, low-intensity, feelings.

Now even a sympathetic reader has good reason to be suspicious about this argument. Barry Stroud, for example, is one commentator who has expressed dissatisfaction with it. He claims that the argument is both unsound and contradictory to Hume's own basic principles.[33] The argument is unsound because the conclusion that actions are

[33]Barry Stroud, Hume, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 164-165.

the result of calm passions which are known "more by their effects than by their immediate feeling or sensation", only follows if we already know that it is a calm passion, rather than something else, that caused the action. But this is precisely what is at issue, both in the present argument, and in the opposition between Kant and Hume: is this a passion or is it reason motivating an action?

In addition, Stroud claims, the argument is also inconsistent with one of Hume's basic principles about what we can know. Stroud states:

> Hume says: "'Tis certain" that there are [calm] passions and desires; they feel to us just like "determinations of reason" but he claims to know they are not. This does not cohere very well with his fundamental principle that we cannot be wrong about the contents of our own minds at a given moment.[34]

So perhaps Hume is insisting too strongly that what occurs in the mind, for instance, in considering acting out of a sense of duty, is the influence of a calm passion, rather than reason. Is what is going on in the mind simply a battle between calm and violent passions? This suggestion is inconsistent with Hume's admission that reason does have important work to do to ensure the appropriate moral response. So what is the relationship between reason and the calm passions?

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[34]Stroud, 164.

Perhaps then an alternative interpretation of moral acts done for the sake of duty is better. Perhaps Hume is saying that we act out of a regard for moral obligation only because we do, generally, as human beings, experience feelings of benevolence or sympathy, and we experience a feeling of approval of them, even though, in a particular instance, we may find ourselves completely devoid of any inkling of sympathetic or benevolent feeling.[35] On this interpretation, although I do not now experience any feelings of sympathy, I can act out of regard for duty because there is a natural human disposition for sympathy and reason has shown this action to be causally related to the aspects of this disposition that I desire. Thus, the calm passions are interpreted here not as occurrent desires, but as natural dispositions. This interpretation seems to be supported by the text in which Hume claims that calm passions (benevolence, propensity to good, etc.) are "certain instincts." This interpretation is also attractive because it is successful in explaining prudential actions, that is, actions which are performed in light of our future self-interest. I need not now feel hunger, not even faintly, in order to be motivated to go to the grocery store. My decision to go grocery shopping,

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[35]This interpretation is suggested to me by an unpublished paper by Daniel Shaw, "Hume's Theory of Motivation."

however, can be understood in terms of my disposition to avoid the pain of hunger and in terms of my instinctual desire to preserve my existence.

I do not think that the second interpretation is successful, however, either in terms of the analysis of actions done out of a regard for moral obligation, or in other cases where lively passions are absent. Why should the fact of a natural disposition for sympathy motivate in a situation where the feeling of sympathy is not active in the moral agent? Or why should the fact of a natural disposition for benevolence motivate in a situation where the feeling of benevolence is not active in the moral agent? Can dispositions motivate if they are not occurrently perceived?

This hardly seems to be an acceptable conclusion. The correct interpretation, I think, is that Hume's main point in his motivational theory is not that reason cannot motivate, but that reason <u>alone</u> cannot motivate. Reason can only motivate in view of ends we naturally desire, that is, in view of natural dispositions. Dispositions can be motivating <u>if</u> those dispositions are <u>called up</u> by the processes of reason. Hume, in emphasizing the dependent role of reason, discusses the role reason plays in bringing about the motivating influence of instincts or propensities. He states:

> Ask a man why he uses exercise; he will answer, because he desires to keep his health. If you then enquire, why he desires health, he will readily reply, because sickness is painful. If you push your enquiries farther, and desire a reason why he hates pain, it is impossible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object (E, 293).

Reason can motivate through instincts or dispositions. In this case, reason motivates a person to exercise by pointing out the causal connections between exercise and health, and between health and pleasure or absence of pain. Without the instinctual desire for pleasure, it is true, reason would not have been able to motivate a person into exercising. But without reason, the natural instinct to prefer pleasure over pain could never motivate actions which are causally related to pleasure. Without reason, we could not be motivated to do anything we are not directly motivated to do, whether it be exercising, or giving up smoking, or using salt.

Likewise, we could never be motivated to act out of a sense of duty unless reason was instrumental in activating our natural dispositions of sympathy, or of moral approval. Reason can motivate, but not independently of such dispositions. These natural dispositions are ultimate ends; we cannot ask why we prefer or pursue them. They are facts about human existence which, Hume says, can never "be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependance on the intellectual faculties" (E, 293). They

are reasons in themselves for action, but we cannot use reason to establish them as reasons. In short, they are self-justifying.

Now reason can activate natural dispositions in other ways than discovering causal connections. Hume, we saw, noted that reason is necessary in order to draw comparisons, establish facts, and note complex relationships. However, these are processes we must use to apply Kant's categorical imperative. So the difference between Kant and Hume does not consist in disagreeing that reason must perform these functions in order to secure the appropriate moral responses.

Hume formulated his doctrine of the calm passions to fill the gap between actions and motivation where there are no attending strong inclinations. Since he held that reason is impotent in terms of motivation, there certainly was some explaining to do. But his arguments for the impotence of reason may instead have been an exaggerated response to his rightful concern to repudiate Hobbesian psychology and to establish the pervasive role of sympathy in virtuous conduct. In fact, from a broader perspective, his argument may be a result, not only to the moral scepticism inspired by Hobbes, but also to the speculative crisis inspired also by Hobbes, but developed by Locke and

Berkeley.[36] That is, given this background, Hume's suspicions of the power of reason on many fronts are not surprising.

Actions done out of a sense of duty require complex reasoned associations. According to Hume, they are not motivated directly by inclinations or desires (in the Kantian sense). In these actions, aberrant though they may be, reason evokes our natural responses of moral approval or disapproval. The analysis of actions done out of a sense of duty, then, shows that since reasoning is required in order to bring about the experience of moral approval, it seems entirely appropriate to speak of reason as motivating.

This discussion brings us to what may be one of the key differences between Kant and Hume's analysis of actions done for the sake of duty. A key difference is that Hume says that the motivation to act morally (concentrating still on actions done for the sake of duty) lies in our passional responses to these workings of reason, and Kant says that the motivation to act morally consists in our rational response. For Hume, it is moral approval which motivates, and moral approval or disapproval are moral sentiments, affections we naturally have. On the other

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[36]David Norton suggests and develops this historical perspective in his book, David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician.

hand, for Kant, it is the moral law that motivates, the moral law which is experienced as respect. This difference is the reflection of their metaphysical differences, Kant viewing reason as desire-ful and Hume viewing it as desire-less. It was natural for Kant to think of respect for the moral law as essentially rational, since it arises in the face of the categorical imperative, which he sees as issuing from reason. And it was natural for Hume to think of moral approval as passional, given his emphases. Basically, however, both philosophers want to make the point that we by nature react positively to, that is, are motivated by, morality. But whereas Hume was content with his empirical observations that human beings in fact respond with a sense of moral approval or disapproval to morality or immorality respectively, Kant wanted to raise the response to necessity; just as whereas Hume was content with his empirical observations that human beings in fact make causal inferences on the basis of constant connections; Kant raised the response to a necessary one.

Now Hume has not succeeded in showing that his account is the only, or even the best account, unless he has really given a convincing argument for the inefficacy of reason. With the possibility that Hume's is an "exaggerated response" in mind, let us return to his argument for the motivational inefficacy of reason, examined first in the second section of this chapter. A full and comprehensive

appraisal of that argument is a major undertaking, far beyond the scope of this work. But I can present here an important criticism which suggests limitations of Hume's position. The suggestion will illustrate, moreover, as promised, that much of the difference between Hume and Kant is more "metaphysical" than ethical, and that Hume has not given a convincing argument against "rational internalism" as an ethical doctrine.

That premise concerns his definition of reason as the "discovery of truth and falsehood," which operates either demonstratively or empirically, in the determination of causal relations or of matters of fact. I regard this is as a "metaphysical" claim because it has to do with the ultimate nature of reason. That characterization of reason can only be regarded as a presupposition of the present argument. Certainly, an alternative characterization of reason is given by Kant who sees it as that faculty which naturally is driven beyond the realm of mere truth and falsehood (the realm of knowledge), in its search, indeed, in its desire, for the understanding of things of which knowledge is impossible. And, that characterization is a presupposition of Kant's view of reason as morally motivating.

Are there any considerations which would lead us to adopt one view over the other? In the speculative realm, Kant claims that the ideas of God, freedom and the soul are

all ramifications of, and evidence for, the motivating powers of reason. In the moral realm, Kant claims that the very experience of the force of moral obligations in the absence of virtuous inclinations or in the presence of contrary ones, depends on reason's motivating power. These claims make sense in view of Kant's characterization of the faculty of reason as desire-ful (having its own desires). But Hume thinks of the natural desires of moral sentiment or of intellectual curiosity as essentially outside of reason; as that in view of which reason operates, rather than as driving reason from within.

At one level, then, the dispute between Hume as paradigmatic critic of Rational Internalism and Kant as paradigmatic defender of Rational Internalism resolves into a dispute between Hume and Kant, the metaphysicians, on issues far more wide-ranging than the relatively simple issue of whether reason can motivate action. Having seen now how this is so, we must leave this aspect of their debate behind and return to our focus, Rational Internalism. Our concern is whether reason can be motivating. Since the key difference between Kant and Hume is that Hume says that reason can be motivating (in actions done for the sake of duty) only in light of the fact that humans naturally respond positively to the recognition of moral obligation, and that natural response is outside of reason, whereas Kant says it is inside of reason, the

opposition between the two is "academic" rather than "practical."

In conclusion, from reading Kant and Hume sympathetically, we know that Kant's rationalism is inspired by the reflection that when we recognize a moral obligation in the face of inappropriate inclinations, that recognition is a result of our ability to see that the maxim behind an action which ignores or defies moral obligation is in contradiction with the nature of the will. When our self-interested inclinations are lively, it is easy to become confused and distracted, and to be inattentive to our naturally sympathetic or benevolent responses. So Kant's account of acts done for the sake of duty explains how we can reestablish an appropriate, indeed a moral, response. I know I am obligated to respond benevolently when I know that in the same situation I would desire, by nature, another person's kindness. Kant is only claiming that reason is necessary to identify the situation as a moral one. He is saying that "reason alone" determines morality because only reason can detect contradiction. But he is not saying that reason is the only motivator, that sympathy is irrelevant, that acting morally is not satisfying in a virtuous person, that reason can detect all contradictions associated with immorality independently of knowledge about our natures, or that it isn't natural for us to be motivated by moral perceptions.

Hume wanted to secure moral knowledge on the basis of natural passions, but argued that our passions include not only the obvious "violent" ones, but also the calm ones, such as sympathy or moral approval. But Hume was mistaken to have stripped reason of all motivational influence, even on his own account of its activity. If we correct for this, it leaves Hume much closer to Kant that we first thought.

Both Kant and Hume believe that we are naturally influenced by the recognition of moral obligation, Hume believing that we respond though our passions, and Kant believing that we respond through our reason. Hume, however, has not given us any convincing reason why that response must be understood in terms of our passional rather than our rational natures. While both speak in terms of our natures as divided into the rational and the sensuous, Hume may be the more guilty in presenting an artificially dichotomous view. Kant at least allows desire to infiltrate both aspects of our existence. Hume may in fact be right that in order to make moral judgments it is necessary to "consult our own breasts," but there is no reason to believe that when we do, what we find there is not the influence of reason.

We may conclude, then, that Hume's challenge to Rational Internalism is not convincing, and that his position may be seen as actually compatible with it. Hume

does admit that reason is motivating in the sense that it can "call up" or activate natural dispositions, including the disposition to react positively to morality. Also, he believes that after "consulting one's breast" and coming to the recognition that a moral obligation exists, we have a reason, independent of any other desire or inclination, for acting morally.

Further, Hume's anti-rational internalism does not allow for authentic moral indifference any better than Kant's--in fact, he too would deny that it exists. The "sensible knave" does not really believe that he is morally required to act justly in those cases because he is constitutionally perverse. He doesn't respond to morality like others. He asks "Why should I?" because he doesn't really perceive a moral obligation. Hume believes that moral approval in itself is the motive for action--that once moral approval is experienced there is no need to ask: Why should I? This testifies that Hume also thought that moral motivation is entailed by moral judgment.

Ironically, then, Hume's theory of moral motivation actually conforms to Nagel's theory of Rational Internalism. This point will become clear in the next chapter, through an exegesis on Nagel's argument in The Possibility of Altruism.

CHAPTER 6

NAGEL'S RATIONAL INTERNALISM

We have now examined Rational Internalism in light of objections raised against internalism generally, and rational internalism specifically, and have shown that none of these objections succeed in demonstrating that Rational Internalism is an inadequate theory of moral motivation. We began our examination of the distinction between ethical internalism and externalism with Thomas Nagel's versions of the distinction, and it is only appropriate to return, now, to his defense of Rational Internalism. An explanation of Nagel's defense will provide the opportunity to arrive at a greater degree of clarity about the relationship Nagel sees between the genuine and authentic recognition of moral obligation and moral motivation. A review of Nagel's defense of Rational Internalism will be given in Section I; and a discussion of some criticisms of Nagel's defense of Rational Internalism will be the focus of Section II. In the following and final chapter, Nagel's analysis of the

relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation will be compared to that of Kant, Falk, Korsgaard, and (now that we have shown that the differences between Kant and Hume are not as great as they appear), to Hume's account as well. When these tasks have been completed, we will be in a position, to draw all the threads of explication, distinction, and argument of the previous chapters together into a statement of Rational Internalism and its view of the relationship of moral cognition and moral motivation.

I

Nagel, in The Possibility of Altruism, attempts to show that reason has a motivational capacity, and that we need not explain altruistic or moral acts in terms of any present desires an agent may have. By "altruism" he does not merely refer to the narrow class of self-sacrificial or supererogatory acts, but much more generally, to the capacity to take active concern in the well-being of others. By altruism, he means "any behavior motivated merely by the belief that someone else will benefit or avoid harm by it" (PA, 16). Since "altruism" is used in this more general sense, and since so much of morality has to do with obligations to others, by showing how altruism is possible, we may say that Nagel in effect shows how (this part of) morality is possible. (However, "altruism"

is broader than morality, since it includes actions concerned with the well-being of others to which we have no obligation.)

Nagel structures his argument by first presenting an analysis of prudence, by which he means "practical foresight" (rather than "self-interested" action). His analysis is constructed to show how prudence is possible. Through his analysis Nagel shows that the best explanation of the phenomena of prudential activity is not, and cannot be, given in terms of any actual desire experienced by the agent. Instead, it involves a (formal) structure of practical thinking such that the agent has a reason to promote his or her future welfare. By showing how prudence is possible, we may say that Nagel shows how the remaining part of morality, the part that involves obligations to ourselves, is possible--keeping in mind that prudence is broader than this part of morality. That is, he rejects the view that prudence can only be explained in terms of some present desire about the future that the agent has. He then draws a parallel between prudence and altruism and shows that altruistic actions need not be explained in terms of any actual desires in the agent for the well-being of others, nor in terms of any antecedent feelings of sympathy or benevolence. Rather, it is best explained on the basis of a (formal) structure of practical thinking

such that the agent has a reason to promote the well-being of others.

That is, to begin with an overview of the argument, the possibility of prudence and of altruism can be understood independently of all such desires or sentiments and instead in terms of "direct reasons" agents have for the promotion of their future interest, or for the promotion of the interests of others. Ultimately, the possibility of having direct reasons for prudence or for altruism must be understood in light of a motivational framework or structure provided by an inescapable "conception of oneself." Prudence, he argues, is best explained in terms of the "metaphysical conception" of a person as "a temporally persistent being" (PA, 58)--one who persists over time, who is aware of himself as a being with not only a present, but a past and future as well. Prudence is possible because we conceive of ourselves as beings for whom the future, past and the present are all equally real.

Altruism is then also explained in terms of a "metaphysical conception" of a person, namely, as "one among others." Altruism is possible because we conceive of ourselves as beings who recognize the equal reality of others. Nagel's account of altruism is not logically dependent on the account of prudence. Although the account of altruism does build on points established in the

discussion of prudence, the analysis of prudence is used chiefly as an heuristic device--an helpful preparation for the analysis of altruism. This means, of course, that the analyses should be examined independently; the analysis of prudence might be satisfactory while that of altruism might not. Since we are concerned with the problem of moral motivation, the analysis of prudence will be examined only to the extent that it provides an introduction to the analysis of altruism.

Nagel begins his analysis of prudence by clarifying the notion of desire and its relation to action. In response to the common assumption that underlying any intentional act there must be a motivating desire, he claims that a distinction must be made between two sorts of desires. An unmotivated desire is one which "simply comes to us" as a result of appetites or emotions. Unmotivated desires "assail us"--they come to us whether we want them to or not (PA, 29). But motivated desires "are arrived at by decision and after deliberation" (PA, 29). Of course, action can often be explained, at least in part, by the presence of desires that simply come to us. Nagel admits that in some sense, at least, it is true that there is always some desire operating in action. The desire which is present in acting which is not a result of unmotivated desire is the desire which is a result of deliberation. Nagel calls this "motivated desire." But the claim that

some sort of desire is always operative because there is always at least "motivated desire," even if there is no "unmotivated desire" is trivial. For then, the explanation for any act not motivated by unmotivated desire will not be anything other than the reason given for that action. That is, "motivated desire" is nothing other than the reason for the action; and therefore it doesn't make sense to speak of the motivated desire as that which motivates, and so claim that it is distinct from the reason itself, so that, even when reason is operative, so is some sort of (distinct) desire.

Thus, using Nagel's example, when I become thirsty, I experience an unmotivated desire; but when I deposit my change into the slot in the pop machine I do so because I reason that this would be a means to acquire that which would satisfy my thirst. To explain the activity of depositing my change, it is only trivially true that I am acting on a desire to deposit my change. This desire would be a motivated desire, based on, or rather none other than, my reason to do so motivating me to do so. I put the dimes into the slot not because I desire to deposit them, but because I recognize this activity as a means to satisfy my thirst. The explanation of the motivation for acts in terms of a recognition of means-end relationship discovered by reason is better than the account that insists on the presence of operative desires for each particular action.

Nagel says that no further explanation of this fact is needed. It is part of what it means to be a human being: we simply are the sorts of beings who can act on reasons such as means-ends relationships.

Thus, just as I need not explain present actions always in terms of unmotivated desires, I also need not explain prudential activity, that is, activity undertaken in light of my future interests, in light of present unmotivated desires. The means-end relation which is the source of reasons for many of my actions is also operative as the source of reasons to act in light of future desires. Nagel argues that if we know we will have a desire in the future, the capacity of reason to recognize the means-end relation will generate a reason to act in the appropriate way in the present. So prudential activity need not be explained in terms of a present unmotivated desire.

Nagel further shows that the view that a present desire must be operative is problematic in several ways. First, I could now have a desire for something in the future, and at the same time I could possibly foretell that I would no longer have that desire at the relevant future time. Second, I may be able to foretell that in the future I will have a certain desire but at the same time I may presently have no such desire. Third, it is possible that my present desires for the future could be in conflict with desires which I expect I will have in the future. All of

these possible situations present problems for those who insist that in prudential activity there must be a presently operative unmotivated desire. How am I to determine how my desires for the future are to be weighed against my present desires--some of which (in the third example) even conflict directly with the future ones.

Those who want to posit a present unmotivated prudential desire (i.e., a desire to fulfill my future desires) cannot explain how it is that desire is to be balanced by the other desires involved. Nagel is not denying that there may indeed be such a present prudential desire; instead he wants to show that, even if there is such a desire, that desire does not adequately explain how people in fact choose to act. The positing of a present prudential desire is presumably supposed to explain why a person chooses to act in a certain way; but, it does not. The posited prudential desire is no more than one among several possible existent desires, both desires for the present and other nonprudential desires for the future; and it can't itself resolve their multiplicity into a single course of action.

To present a picture of human beings as beings that always must act on the basis of some unmotivated desire or other is therefore to give an inadequate account of human activity. We act prudentially, Nagel says, because there is good <u>reason</u> to do so, not because of the presence of

unmotivated desires. We act prudentially because we are distinctly open to our futures, and are such beings as can reason about means-ends relations between present activity and future desires. We are not simply subject to whatever whims our desires for the present or for the future present us with. Indeed, the further recognition that desires for the future do not always provide good reasons for acting in a certain way shows that it would be better to look elsewhere for the sources of prudential activity.

According to Nagel then, prudential activity is best explained, not by reference to desires, but on the basis of reason itself. We do not need a present desire to provide the "bridge" to our future because that bridge is provided by the nature of reason, in Nagel's terms, by "formal conditions of practical reason" (PA, 43). Practical reason, to begin with, is general by nature. That is, if we desire something--if we recognize something as a value--we have a reason to act in a way which directly or derivatively promotes that value. If we have reason to do something in the present, that reason applies, at least in a prima facie way, also to the future. (Other considerations or reasons may also enter in, however.) And if we have a reason to do something in the future, we have a reason to direct ourselves in the present to that future goal. In these ways, reasons are timeless, or "tenseless". Thus, the possibility that humans can act prudentially is

due to "the metaphysics of the person"--or, in more simply, by the way in which human beings conceive of themselves. With respect to prudence, human beings see themselves as beings that persist through time--beings with a past, present, and future; as temporal beings. Because reasons are tenseless, and because persons are temporal beings, it is possible to conduct oneself in light of future considerations, and to experience regret for not having adequately prepared for the future.

Failure to make provisions for the future indicates what Nagel calls a dissociation on the part of the individual from their future self. Such dissociation from the future can be explained in terms of cowardice, or weakness. But to admit to the possibility of this dissociation does not at all refute Nagel's position that reason can provide the motivating impetus for acting in light of future considerations. It is only to admit that the motivational powers of reason is influenced by other motivational influences, such as of the emotions or of appetitive desires. Our response to such dissociation, however, is that it indicates a defect in the person. We intuitively think that a person ought to make provisions for their best interests for the future. Nagel explains this intuition by pointing to our temporal natures and the character of reasons as generally applicable through time.

This is sufficient as a summary of Nagel's argument about reason's motivating role in prudential judgment about actions. The way for Nagel's analysis of altruism has now been prepared.

The possibility of acting out of concern for the interest of others without appealing to our own self interest or to antecedent sentiments such as feelings of sympathy or compassion--the possibility of altruism--is shown to be independent of the presence of any unmotivated desire on the part of the subject. Nagel reminds his readers again that of course it is trivially true that there is always some sort of desire behind altruistic action in the sense of a motivated desire which is a result of deliberation, i.e., which is the reason for acting itself. But he wants to deny that there must be an unmotivated desire--one that simply comes to us--present in order to explain moral or altruistic incentives.

Above, Nagel identified problems with the assumption that there must be unmotivated prudential desires in order to explain prudential activity, including the argument that such an assumption cannot explain how the posited prudential desires are to be balanced with other present desires, either for the present or for the future. Here he argues analogically that the assumption that there must be (unmotivated) "altruistic desires" is also problematic. The suggestion that moral activity must be explained in

terms of unmotivated desires, which are in turn a result of sentiments of sympathy or benevolence, is problematic in that those sentiments are "neither universal nor obvious enough to explain all altruistic motivation, and that they are evidently false to the phenomena" (PA, 80). While sometimes it may appear that certain altruistic acts are based on sympathy or feelings of benevolence, indeed it is certainly not obvious that there are always such desires underlying altruistic acts. And sometimes it seems more obvious that an altruistic act is contrary to any present desire.

Note that this three-part argument parallels the one given above regarding prudence. Furthermore, Nagel claims, the explanation given by egoists that self-interest provides the unmotivated desires necessary for altruism is also problematic, but not for reasons traditionally given.[1] Egoism is always already mistaken in that it begins with a mistaken conception of the nature of a person. Nagel seems to suggest that, if those who think that they are egoists would reflect on even rather simple cases, they would realize that their primitive moral responses are not based on self-interest, but rather on objective reasons, that is, reasons which apply to all other persons.

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[1]Nagel cites Brian Medlin, Kurt Baier and G. E. Moore as philosophers who show the inadequacy of egoism by pointing to various contradictions to which the theory leads.

So, if I realize that I am standing on another person's gouty toes, I will recognize that I ought to remove my heel. While the explanation that egoism would give--that it is somehow in my own self-interest to remove my heels from the other's gouty toes--might in some cases be true, in most cases it would be overly complex and unsuitable to the simplicity of the actual experience.

Of course, Nagel is not denying that some unmotivated desires might be the actual motivating influence in any particular altruistic action. For instance, it is very possible that reasons of self-interest or feelings of sympathy could be the motivating influence behind an act. I may remove my heel because I fear the consequences of not doing so. But Nagel's claim is that such reasons are not necessarily the motivating influence. Reason itself can be motivating. The motivational influence of reason in altruism can be explained, as in prudence, as due to the "metaphysics" of a person--the way we necessarily conceive of ourselves.

The conception of ourselves that is reflected in the most pervasively accepted moral principle, the Golden Rule, which calls upon us to ask ourselves how we would feel if we were treated in ways we are considering treating others, is the conception of ourselves "as one person among others, and of others as persons in just as full a sense" (PA, 88). Recognizing others as persons in the full sense means

recognizing the full reality of other persons, and recognizing the full reality of others requires us to view ourselves as "identical with a particular, impersonally specifiable inhabitant of the world...among others of a similar nature" (PA, 100).

Altruism, then, like prudence, is required by reason. Because we view ourselves as "one among others," the reasons which we act upon must be capable of being evaluated in terms of this conception. So a reason which applies subjectively, but only subjectively, is not acceptable in light of our self-conception as one among others. That is, our reasons must be such that other persons such as ourselves would also accept them. Obviously, Nagel's distinction between subjective and objective reasons here calls to mind Kant's distinction between subjective and objective maxims. We can judge our reasons to be objective because we are capable of viewing ourselves impersonally and objectively, and a test of this is whether other persons would accept our reasons.

Practical judgments based on subjective reasons can be motivational, but can be motivational through reason only when the subjective reasons are also objective in the sense just explained. The motivational content of the unobjectifiable subjective reason, when put into the context of the impersonal standpoint of reason, where the subject regards him or herself as one among other persons--

as someone, rather than as an isolated I--pales in significance. But if the subjective reason is also objectifiable and consistent with the impersonal standpoint, then the motivational content is unchecked, unless perhaps there are other operative conflicting objective reasons. This is not to say that the unobjectifiable subjective reason ceases to be a motive, or even becomes a weaker motive; but only that subjective reasons which are objectifiable are also motivating, and there may be more than one objective reason motivating at the same time. Thus, in altruism, as in prudence, we experience tensions between various types of reasons. As Nagel states: "Ethics is a struggle against a certain form of the egocentric predicament, just as prudential reasoning is a struggle against domination by the present" (PA, 100). Just as the efficacy of prudential reasons can fail because of the influence of more proximate present desires, the efficacy of altruistic reasons can fail because of the influence of more proximate personal desires. But at the same time, more proximate reasons and desires do not always "win" and yield action. Nagel is clear that, among multiple motivations in a given situation, any of them could in principle be efficacious for action. (The structure of this process of getting from being multiply motivated-to-act to actually acting is a complex question that must be passed over in this work.)

Nagel's argument for the direct motivational influence of reasons in altruism is strikingly simple, like his argument for reason's motivational influence in prudence. He first removes the obstacle of the view that all our actions must be explained in terms of some (unmotivated) desire. Reasons are shown to be motivational in themselves and also through means-ends relationships, both in terms of present and of future concerns. He then shows that certain types of reasons are motivational because of the nature of human beings: since we are temporal beings we can be motivated directly by reasons derived from a concern for future welfare; and since we are beings who can regard ourselves impersonally as "one among others" we can be motivated by the concerns of others. Reason extends its influence across the barriers of time and of individual persons. Reasons are "general" in that they apply tenselessly and impersonally. So Nagel has demonstrated the motivational efficacy of reason by examining the structure of reason-giving in light of the structure of reason givers.

II

Having examined Nagel's analyses, we now should look at some of those who have criticized Nagel's work in the

Possibility of Altruism. Given the amount of publicity the book has had, one would have expected it to have generated a large body of literature in response. Amazingly, there has been strikingly little. But upon further reflection, this lack of critical response proves not to be amazing at all, but in fact quite natural.

Two early book reviews of Nagel's book were critical but without supporting argument. John Benson, in his review, simply asserts that the analysis of prudence is the "more successful part of Nagel's book, but that Nagel did not succeed at "providing a metaphysical foundation for morals."[2] But Benson gives no reason for his criticism. Bernard Gert also claims that while Nagel's repudiation of the view that desire must always be operative in prudential action is correct, the analysis of altruism as a necessary constraint on reason is not. But he gives no reasons either. Gert also asserts without argument that, while it is irrational not to respond to reasons which pertain to one's future well-being, it is not irrational to act immorally, even while regarding oneself impersonally.[3] But without argument, no real criticism of Nagel's defense of Rational Internalism has been advanced.

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[2]John Benson, Philosophical Quarterly, Jan., 1972, vol. 22): 82-3.

[3]Bernard Gert, Journal of Philosophy (1972, vol. 69): 340-344.

Stephen Darwall, on the other hand, has advanced an argument purporting to show that Nagel's analysis is defective. In his book, Impartial Reason, Darwall defends the thesis that practical reason is impartial. That is, in his own words, he argues that "reasons to act are grounded in principles that it would be (relatively) rational to choose were a person to adopt a perspective impartial between agents and to select principles for all to act on."[4] Darwall acknowledges the influence of Nagel's work on the development of his own position, but sees his own work as correcting the defect of Nagel's analysis.

Like Nagel, Darwall rejects the Desire Based Reasons Thesis, the thesis that all reasons for action are those grounded in the desires of the agent.[5] Darwall introduces his objection to Nagel's analysis by claiming that Nagel's title, The Possibility of Altruism, is misleading. Rather than having shown that altruism is a possibility, Nagel's analysis is said to lead to the conclusion that "considerations regarding the good of others must be

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[4]Stephen Darwall, Impartial Reason, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 4.

[5]He attributes variations of this view to Gilbert Harmon ("Moral Relativism Defended"), Donald Davidson ("Actions Reasons, and Causes" Journal of Philosophy 60 (1965), David Hume, and rational-decision theorists. He cites Duncan, Luce, and Howard Raiffa's Games and Decisions: Introduction and Critical Survey (New York: Wiley, 1957) as a review of such theories.

reasons for any person to act."[6] Instead of showing that altruism is a rational possibility, Darwall claims that Nagel has shown that altruism is a "rational necessity".[7] As stated, this accusation is ambiguous. Does Darwall mean that for Nagel altruism is necessarily rational? Or does he mean that Nagel shows that self-regarding reasons are necessarily irrational? I take it that Darwall interprets Nagel's analysis in the latter sense, which would mean that Nagel overshoots his goal, proving more than he had intended.

Darwall claims that the conclusion that altruism is a rational necessity follows from what he calls Nagel's "thesis of objectivity."[8] According to Darwall, this is the thesis that all reasons to act that an agent might have must also be objective, that is, applicable to all others. He states: "According to [the thesis of objectivity], no reasons for acting are ultimately subjective."[9] "Irreducibly" subjective reasons (reasons which cannot be applied to others), says Nagel, entail solipsism. But we are not solipsists, according to Nagel, because we can see ourselves impersonally, that is, from an impersonal

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[6]Impartial Reason, 120.

[7]Ibid., 120.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

standpoint. Therefore, on Darwall's interpretation, Nagel must conclude that "irreducibly" subjective reasons are irrational, and the "applicability-to-all" criterion must be fulfilled by every rational reason for action.

Darwall argues at length to show that this larger thesis that "altruism is necessary" depends on an assumption that Nagel makes unwittingly in The Possibility of Altruism and retracts later and in the second edition of the same work. The assumption that Nagel has made is what Darwall calls the "thesis of universality," according to which "no fact can be a reason for anyone unless that same fact would be a reason for anyone to act similarly in relevantly similar circumstances."[10] The two theses combine to show, Darwall argues, that altruism is necessary; that all our actions must be geared to the well-being of others.

Now, it seems that Nagel didn't intend this additional assumption, nor the extended thesis to which it leads, that altruism is necessary. After all, he entitled his book The Possibility of Altruism, not The Necessity of Altruism. And while Nagel argues explicitly for the thesis of objectivity, he does not argue explicitly for the thesis of universality, without which he would not be committed to the extended thesis. Further, Darwall does not give

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[10]Ibid., 117.

compelling evidence that Nagel actually did hold the thesis of universality. Nagel's project was to show that it is perfectly reasonable to act in such a way as to treat others as one would like to be treated oneself. He wanted to show that actions which come into conflict with the well-being of others are irrational because they violate the conception of ourselves as one among others who are equally real. But he has not argued that for something to be a reason for action, that it must have the characteristic of being performed in view of the well-being of others.

In the Postscript to the Second Edition, Nagel modifies his claim that "only objective reasons are acceptable." He claims that subjective reasons are acceptable as long as the claims of the impersonal standpoint are met. He states:

> the subjective reasons that provide our starting point may continue to exert a legitimate independent influence in the lives of those who acknowledge parallel objective reasons as well, for the personal standpoint may retain its power after the claims of the impersonal have been acknowledged (PA, viii).[11]

Now, Darwall takes this comment as an evidence that Nagel had accepted the thesis of universality and hence was committed to the claim that altruism is not only possible, but necessary. However, the postscript can be read in

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[11]See also Thomas Nagel, View From Nowhere (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 159.

another way: Nagel is taking the opportunity to clarify his position. When he said that "the only acceptable reasons are objective reasons" he meant only to say that any reason which conflicts with the impersonal standpoint is not acceptable; they are unacceptable because they are inconsistent with the view we have of ourselves as one among others. Nagel was simply making the Kantian point that subjective maxims which cannot be universalized are unacceptable maxims, and that maxims which are not objective are "self-defeating"; that is, they bring the will into conflict with itself. He states: "Whenever one acts for a reason, I maintain, it must be possible to regard oneself as acting for an objective reason, and promoting an objectively valuable end" (PA, 96-97). If Nagel holds a thesis of universality, it is not that all reasons, if rational, have the characteristic of promoting the well-being of others. Rather, his thesis of universality would only be that every rational person must have, among his reasons for acting, altruistic reasons.

Regarding motivation, Darwall sees Nagel as arguing that since personal practical judgments, such as "I have a reason to do A," have motivational content, then so do impersonal practical judgments, and this produces a problem. First, since reasons are objective, if we acknowledge a reason for action from a personal standpoint, that reason applies also from an impersonal one.

Therefore, if I am motivated by a personal consideration, that consideration will also motivate me to act so that others will be enabled to do the same. Darwall states:

> "This means, Nagel claims, that if we are to be able to make the same practical judgments about ourselves from personal and impersonal standpoints, then accepting an impersonal practical judgment ('S has a reason to do A') must routinely move one to <u>want</u> S to do A and to do whatever would lead to S's doing A."[12]

The extension of motivational content from personal to impersonal practical judgments, as Darwall sees it, is the problematic area of Nagel's analysis. He claims that Nagel's argument is fallacious because it is ambiguous. The ambiguity Darwall discusses concerns the meaning of the claim that personal practical judgments have motivational content. The claim that personal practical judgments have motivational content can be said to have two senses, says Darwall: "Is it [the motivational content] part of <u>what one judges</u>? Or is it, rather, part of one's <u>judging</u>: namely, the attitude that one normally has when one judges that there is reason for one do to A?"[13] Now, Darwall thinks that Nagel is committed to the former interpretation, that the motivational content of personal practical judgments is part of <u>what</u> one judges, presumably, because the motivation is supposed to be present either

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[12]Ibid., 124.

[13]Ibid., 127.

from a personal or from an impersonal standpoint.[14] But Darwall thinks that there is no justification for Nagel to adopt the former over the latter interpretation, and that it is only obvious that something is a reason for someone to act if, upon rational consideration, the person is given some motivation to so act so that the motivational content is part of the judging.

Now this last comment sounds very close to what Nagel himself says, i.e., that the reason and the motivation are identical, and to the claim that Darwall himself attributes to Nagel in the following passage:

> As Nagel is thinking of it, the motivational content of the personal practical judgment cannot simply be some fact about how one would be moved were one to make the judgment, rather it is the motivation or attitude itself.[15]

So it is difficult to see why Darwall attributes the unacceptable view to Nagel, unless Darwall thinks that, for there to be a conflict between the personal and impersonal points of view, this conflict must be between their contents (what one judges). But Nagel's argument, in fact, seems clearly to be that one would be "trying" to have mutually exclusive motivations simultaneously. It is this impossibility, written of also by Kant, that has been described as "self-defeating" by scholars searching for

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[14]Ibid., 126.

[15]Ibid., 127.

English language to express it. In any case, there is little reason to think Nagel has made the particular error Darwall attributes to him, of losing sight of the being-motivated in favor of what-one-is-motivated about. So Nagel's arguments in support of Rational Internalism remain unscathed.

If it is true that Nagel's thesis of objectivity entails that we are motivated by all reasons for action, it is not the position that Nagel meant to adopt. All he meant to show is that since we are not solipsists, we recognize that <u>our</u> reasons to act might be <u>others'</u> also, and that our reasons are not objective if they cannot be extended beyond ourselves. What is important for Nagel is that subjective reasons must be evaluated from an impersonal standpoint. Criticisms such as Darwall's, I suspect, led Nagel to clarify his claim that "only objective reasons are acceptable". But Nagel's defense of the possibility of altruism, acting for the sake of others independently of any occurrent desire or antecedent sentiment, is not dependent on the claim that all reasons for action must be objective. Nagel is willing to modify his thesis of objectivity. So the objection that Darwall raises does not in itself undermine Nagel's defense of Rational Internalism.

E. J. Bond is another who has raised criticisms against Nagel's analysis of altruism. In his book, <u>Reason</u>

and Value, Bond seeks to find a solution to the following dilemma:

> If practical rationality and morality are a matter of reason or cognition, which are objective and universal, they must lack the power to motivate, since that power depends upon the presence of the relevant contingent desires. If, on the other hand, practical (including moral) reasoning is confined within the limits of the agent's contingent desires, there can be no universal or objective reasons for action.[16]

While stated in a way that applies beyond the sphere of morality, we have seen this dilemma concerning practical reasoning expressed by Frankena, who inclined towards (what he sees as) externalism, because he believed that morality is objective, but could not explain how the motivation to be moral would be accounted for.[17] Applied to morality, the dilemma for Frankena was the following: if morality is objective and universal, then it is difficult to explain how a person can be motivated to act morally, but if moral motivation is tied to subjective desires, then moral motivation is "held hostage" to whatever subjective desires exist.

Bond defends a view of practical rationality in which value is seen as independent of desire and yet as connected with motivation. He argues that the solution to the dilemma consists in the necessary connection between desire

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[16]Bond, Reason and Value, 6.

[17]See Chapter 1, 39.

and motivation, between reasons and motivation, and between reasons and value. That is, Bond believes there can be no motivation independently of desire, that reasons can be motivating, that this motivational influence exists because reasons are grounded in values. Practical moral reason is possible ultimately because "all value is necessarily objective."[18] His criticism of Nagel, generally stated, is that Nagel fails to provide a true solution to the dilemma. His main criticism is stated in the following passage:

> Nagel would appear to have a way out of this dilemma. Not just the agent's future as well as his present desires create reasons for him, but the desires of every person create reasons for every person. Where there is a desire, present or future, mine or yours, there is a reason. And the understanding that such desires exist can motivate actions: thus it is possible to be prudent and to be moral. Nothing is said here about goods, only about reasons and desires. Nothing is said about value or justification, only about reasons and the possibility of action. Reasons remain firmly attached to desires. So whereas Nagel's account, if accepted, would show how universal prudential and moral reasoning is possible and can be effective, it is silent on the subject of goodness or worth, and that is because it is supposed that value theory, including ethics, is a branch of motivation theory, metaphysical though it may be. Ultimately there is no worth, only desire and its satisfaction. So this is not a true solution to our dilemma, which partly concerns the seemingly necessary connection between reasons and value achievable by action, between practical reason and the good.[19]

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[18]Bond, 84.

[19]Ibid., 7. (Emphasis added, except for "future" and "every".)

But Nagel's account does offer a solution to this dilemma. Nagel's point is to argue that it is not the case that agents are motivated only by unmotivated desires; reasons also motivate, and this is the proposed link between moral reason and motivation. Bond stresses that motivation must be linked to desire. In response, Nagel holds that it is (trivially) true that motivation is always connected to desire; but he focuses on "motivated" desires, desires we have upon reflection and deliberation. The motivated desire is the reason for which the agent acts.

Bond, however, finds this analysis wholly unsatisfactory. He speaks of Nagel's "motivated desires" as "logical ghosts." In identifying the reason for the action with the motive for it, Bond says that for Nagel the desire is:

> nothing at all, a mere inference from the fact that the act was done, a logical ghost and nothing more...Nagel's want exists only as an inference from an action: no action, no want. It is a logical ghost that can play no part at all in the motivation of the action.[20]

Bond explains this claim further by arguing that cognitions, by themselves, cannot function as motivators because they are not connected to real desire, which in turn is connected to value. He believes that behind every action there is an actual ("real, live, present") desire.[21]

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[20]Ibid., 13.

[21]Ibid., 36.

Now, these desires come into being, not spontaneously, like Nagel's unmotivated desires, but rather, like Nagel's motivated desires, upon reflection. They are based, not on subjective motivating reasons (like Nagel's unmotivated desires), but on grounding or justifying reasons, which are based on facts outside of the agent's beliefs or current desires. Grounding reasons are motivating because they are tied, necessarily, to values. So Bond thinks that Nagel's "motivated reasons" are "logical ghosts" because Nagel has not "grounded" them in values.

Regarding Bond's first reason for this claim, Nagel neither says nor implies that motivated desires are simply logical inferences from actions. How could they be if, as we have pointed out, Nagel holds that not every motivation leads to action. Nagel recognizes that there are numerous ways that a particular instance of motivational influence can be blocked. Further, for Nagel, moral reasons for acting, are necessarily objective.[22] The objectivity of moral reasons exists because values are objective. He states:

> The principle underlying altruism will require, in other words, that all reasons be construable as expressing objective rather than subjective values...Therefore, the acceptance of prudence, or all altruism, is no substitute fro a general theory of value and human interests. Both

[22]Even though Nagel has modified his claim that all reasons are objective, he still is committed to the view that moral reasons must be.

> prudence and altruism impose conditions on the derivative influence of primary reasons whose sources lie elsewhere (PA, 88).

The point about the objectivity of values is reiterated several times in the text.[23] Nagel realizes that the possibility of altruism depends on a view of values as objective, and that a substantive theory of values must be worked out in order to give a complete account of ethical life. He recognizes that his work in The Possibility of Altruism is directed to the task of identifying formal conditions of practical reason, formal conditions which provide a basis, though an incomplete one, for the content of a moral theory.[24]

Nagel's work should not be criticized for concentrating on developing only part of the basis of morality, anymore than an apple should be criticized for not being an orange. Nagel has not said anything which contradicts Bond's analysis, because Nagel does recognize the objectivity of moral values, and hence, Nagel does also

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[23]See PA, p. 89: "There may be values which have nothing to do with interests at all;" p. 90: "The principle behind altruism is that values must be objective, and that any which appear subjective must be associated with others that are not;" and p. 97: "In any case the requirement of objectivity can be regarded as a condition on whatever values one holds."

[24]He states: "I am therefore not in a position to present a substantive moral theory, but that has not been my aim. I have tried rather to argue for certain formal conditions on rational motivation which will determine the general form of a moral theory and provide a partial basis for its content (142)."

believe that behind every act is a "real, live, present, desire."

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Having rejected, in Chapter Three, certain formulations of the internalist/externalist distinction in ethics as unhelpful or uninteresting, we identified Rational Internalism as an alternative which might be more successful in characterizing the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation. In Chapters Four and Five we defended Rational Internalism against common objections that have been raised against internalism generally, and against Rational Internalism specifically. In Chapter Six we reviewed Nagel's defense of the possibility of altruism and interpreted it as a defense of Rational Internalism. We saw that there seem to be no successful refutations of Nagel's thesis. It remains now to present a statement of Rational Internalism which draws together the threads of the previous distinctions and discussions into a full characterization of the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation. I will begin in Section

One, with a discussion of the nature of the necessity that links moral cognition with moral motivation. The necessity has often been characterized by (various types of) internalists as logical, or causal; however, I will argue that for the Rational Internalist, the link is a necessary one, but it is neither logical, nor causal. In Section Two, I will offer a general characterization of Rational Internalism. Then I will give a negative characterization; that is, I will stipulate the kinds of claims to which Rational Internalism is not committed. We will have arrived then, at a comprehensive statement of Rational Internalism; a theory of moral motivation which most accurately accounts for the common sense notion that when a person recognizes a moral obligation, they are motivated to fulfill it; and that the recognition of the moral obligation is a reason in itself to do so.

I

The originators of the internalist/externalist distinction in ethics have characterized internalism as the view that the necessary relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation is a logical one. Falk (though he does not think of internalism and externalism as theories of motivation, as we have seen) attributes this view to Kant. Only Kant, in his view, has adequately

conceived of the relationship between obligation and moral motivation in the "purely formal motivation sense."[1] He thinks of Kant as being committed to the view that having a motive to act morally is a logical implication of saying one has an obligation.[2] As we shall see, this is a problematic interpretation of Kant's view.

Frankena characterized the internalist position precisely in terms of logical entailment. For him, internalism is the view that having a moral obligation logically implies having motivation.[3] The logical implication is natural given the noncognitivist view that moral judgments are merely expressions of emotive responses. According to the emotivist, moral judgments analytically imply motivation--the meaning of a moral judgment is nothing other than the expression of an emotive feeling.

Later writers, except Thomas Wren, either casually and unreflectively refer to the entailment as logical, or simply talk about entailment, without specifying the nature of that entailment.[4] But if a theory of moral motivation

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[1]See Chapter 1, 31.

[2]Falk, 35.

[3]Frankena, 73; See Chapter 1, 39.

[4]Milo, Robertson, and Korsgaard do not specify clearly the nature of the entailment relation. Byron Haines makes reference to the relationship as a logical one (see Chapter Two, 64, note 14. Charlotte Brown also thinks of the

is to be advanced, it must specify how moral cognition entails moral motivation. Wren, as we saw in Chapter 2, suggests that internalists have either thought of the entailment relationship as expressive or as causal.[5] According to the causal interpretation, the belief that something is moral "brings about" the motivation to act morally. Wren states: "This version is properly attributed to Kant and other rationalists such as Piaget, who have in one fashion or another ascribed causal efficacy to the intellectual component of moral judgment."[6] Now it is true that Kant thinks of moral judgment as having causal efficacy, in the sense that moral judgment can lead to the fulfillment of moral obligation, and also in the sense that moral judgment causes moral feeling ("the subjective effects of the moral law"). But a theory of moral motivation is a theory about the connection between moral cognition and moral motivation. Since causal connections have temporal connotations, such that if A is the cause of B, A must be temporally prior to B, the causal interpretation of the connection between moral cognition and moral motivation would view moral cognition as the cause which precedes the motivation to act morally. But

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relationship in logical terms (see Chapter Five, 162, note 10.)

[5]Chapter 2, 70.

[6]Wren, 67.

Kant explicitly prohibits this interpretation. Rather, as we saw in Chapter Five, he claims that the moral judgment (in the form of the moral law) is the motive.[7] The motive is identified with the moral judgment. And this is the view I want to claim for Rational Internalism.

Furthermore, it is odd to think of a causal connection as a type of logical connection. While both are necessary connections, causal connections can only be known by experience; but logical connections can be known analytically.

We saw that for both Hume and Kant the moral judgment is identified with the motive. For Hume, there is no moral judgment without moral approval, and there is no moral approval without moral judgment. So Hume could not be interpreted as holding a causal interpretation of the moral judgment/motive connection. Wren claims that Hume, like other "nonrationalist" philosophers, holds that the necessary connection is an expressive one; that "moral reasoning...is in some non-distorting sense the verbal representation or the articulation of [a] de facto motivational structure."[8] The description of the expressive interpretation of the necessary connection is ambiguous because it is not clear what is meant by a

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[7]See Chapter 5, 205-207.

[8]Wren, 67.

motivational structure. We do not know if the motivational structure refers to occurrent desires or emotive responses so that according to the expressive version, the connection between moral cognition and moral motivation is necessary because statements of moral judgment simply express occurrent desires or emotive responses of the agent (a view held by emotivists, but, I have argued, not by Hume); or if the motivational structure refers to ways in which human beings are in fact motivated, so that according to the expressive version, the connection is necessary because human beings are the kinds of beings who are motivated by moral considerations (a view I attribute both to Kant and to Hume). Wren seems to have the former interpretation in mind, since he claims that the expressive version sees the statement of a moral judgment as expressing motivation on the part of the subject. According to his analysis of the expressive version, the statement that "Eve believes that abortion is wrong" entails (because it expresses) the claim that "Eve is at least somewhat motivated to oppose abortion."[9] If we understand the "motivational structure" to refer to occurrent desires or attitudes which precede the moral judgment, then I think that it is incorrect to think of Hume as holding the expressive version of logical entailment.

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[9]Ibid, 65.

We have established that Kant's view of the necessary relation between moral cognition is not a causal one because he does not think that moral cognition precedes moral motivation. But I do not think that it is correct to claim that for Kant the necessary relation is a logical one either. We cannot simply analyze what a moral judgment is, and determine on that basis that it is motivating. The motivating power of reason is not something that Kant thinks we can discover analytically. It is not an a priori analytic truth that reason motivates. The motivating character of reason is not true simply by definition. Kant does not simply begin by stipulating what he means by practical reason, and then conclude that reason is motivating based on his stipulative definition. Then how is the motivating character of reason known? In what sense is the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation necessary?

We have seen, in Chapter 5, that for Kant the necessity of the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation is discovered through an analysis of actions done out of a sense of duty. That the recognition of a moral obligation can be itself a motive for action is something that we know by the experience of the ineluctable force of moral obligation, that is, the necessity of moral obligation. Our experience of the force of the categorical imperative--our experience of being obligated--is made

intelligible only if reason, in its recognition of an obligation, can motivate. The motivating power of reason is the essence of our freedom or autonomy. Therefore, for Kant, reason is proven to be practical, that is, to have motivating power, through the fact of the presence of the moral law.[10] The motivating force of reason is an a priori truth because of its necessity. But it is an a priori synthetic truth: we know it only because we experience, as a matter of fact, the motivating force of reason.

Thus, for Kant, the proposition that reason is practical (that is, has motivating power) is a priori synthetically true. Now, the question of whether Kant is right in identifying a priori synthetic propositions as a separate class of propositions is beyond the focus of our concern. We must leave this epistemological question aside in order to attend to the nature of the necessity that Kant sees between moral cognition and moral motivation.

If we understand why Kant sees the practical nature of reason as an a priori synthetic truth, we will have a clue to an understanding of that necessary connection. The necessary connection cannot be understood causally or logically (analytically). Nevertheless, that reason can function as a motive is necessary--necessary in order to explain the experience of feeling obligated, even when we

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[10] CPrR, 43-44.

have no inclination to fulfill our obligation. If it weren't possible to act on reason's pronouncements, we could not experience this sense of obligation. For Kant, "ought" implies "can." The idea of freedom, then, must be presupposed in order to explain our sense of duty. Reason must necessarily be conceived as a motive in order to account for, or make intelligible, the experience of moral obligation and the possibility of morality.

Nagel compares his project in the Possibility of Altruism to Kant's on just this point. Besides resembling Kant's position in viewing reason as motivating independently of antecedent desires, Nagel's position resembles Kant's in explaining moral motivation in terms of a "metaphysical conception" of a person.[11] Kant, he says, shows the possibility of morality in terms of the concept of freedom. He shows the possibility of "ethical motives" in terms of "structural features" of persons. Kant shows that morality would not be possible if it were not the case that people thought of themselves as free; Nagel shows that prudence, and ultimately altruism, are explained in terms of (are linked to) "basic features of the conception which each person has of himself and of his relation to the world"--that is, in terms of the "metaphysics of the

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[11] PA, 14.

person" (PA, 19). The metaphysical conception of a person as one among others provides the "groundwork" for altruism.

When Nagel defines internalism and externalism as theories of moral motivation at the beginning of his work, the way in which moral motivation is "tied to" or "guaranteed by" moral awareness is left vague, and intentionally so, since the formulation of the definition of internalism is meant to cover such a wide range of internalist theories--weak (emotivism) and strong; rational and anti-rational.[12] However, his defense of Rational Internalism indicates that for Rational Internalism, the nature of the "tie" or of the "guarantee" is one based on "structural features" of the person, structural features identified in the process of "interpretation." Moral motivation is possible, he says, because of our ability to see ourselves as simply one among others who are equally real. He states: "To recognize others fully as persons requires a conception of oneself as identical with a particular, impersonally specifiable inhabitant of the world, among others of a similar nature" (PA, 100). Since others have a similar nature, they have the same desires and needs (PA, 84-85). Recognizing the full reality of others amounts to recognizing that their needs and desires are the same as your own. This is why Nagel concludes that

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[12]See Chapter 1.

the only acceptable reasons are objective ones: "Whenever one acts for a reason, I maintain, it must be possible to regard oneself as acting for an objective reason, and promoting an objectively valuable end" (PA 96-67).

Thus, Nagel concludes, all moral reasons are objective ones; and the fact that we are capable of recognizing the full reality of others, makes it possible for moral reasons to be motivating. Clearly, it is not simply that the moral reason or judgment causes the moral motivation, rather it is the motive. And clearly, the relationship between moral cognition and moral motivation is not a logical one. He states:

> What can be asserted with some confidence is that insofar as rational requirements, practical or theoretical, represent conditions on belief and action, such necessity as may attach to them is not logical but natural or psychological (PA, 22; emphasis added).

Nagel's defense of Rational Internalism, then, is not given in the form of a deductive proof, but rather as an "interpretation." He defines "interpretation" as an "attempt to link practical principles [prudence and altruism] to equally basic features of the conception which each person has of himself and of his relation to the world" (PA, 18). Nagel may have adopted the term "interpretation" from Heidegger. Michael Gelven, in his commentary on Being and Time explains Heidegger's use of the term: "Hence Heidegger's account of interpretation is

an account that focuses on the ability of the mind to make explicit and to reveal what is somehow already within one's experience."[13] The concept of oneself as one among others is a concept which we already know about ourselves, but which needs to be made explicit in order to explain the possibility of altruism.

An appropriate overall evaluation of Nagel's project, then, requires an evaluation of his portrayal of us as beings who think of themselves, and necessarily think of themselves, in the ways he describes, and whether this portrayal is adequate in order to explain the possibility of morality. His method of interpretation is not a defense by way of proof, but by way of identifying the characteristics ("deep features of our make-up") which make practical reason possible.

Now, it would have to be admitted that the nature of reason as motivating could never be demonstrated logically, because if it were, we would have to begin with a presupposition concerning the nature of reason which would entail the motivating character. But then the demonstration would be arbitrary, and hence unsatisfying. It would also have to be admitted that the nature of reason as motivation could never be demonstrated empirically,

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[13]Michael Gelven, Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 94.

because there is nothing which appears to our senses which could be offered as proof of the motivating power of reason. Nevertheless, we do in fact experience the motivating influence of reason. The sense of duty, then, must be a starting point; a fact which needs to be explained. We cannot prove the motivational influence of reason demonstrably or empirically, but we can offer an explanation of it by identifying the characteristics of human nature which make the motivating influence possible. The explanation, to the extent that it is successful, is deeply satisfying, because it reveals to us the depths of our own natures. The explanation does not reveal anything new, but it contributes to our self-understanding. Thus, Nagel states:

> There is nothing regrettable about finding oneself, in the last analysis, left with something which one cannot choose to accept or reject. What one is left with is probably just oneself, a core without which there could be no choice belonging to the person at all. Some unchosen restrictions on choice are among the conditions of its possibility (PA 23).

This explains why it is not so surprising after all that there have been so few criticisms of Nagel's position. Since all he is doing is identifying certain undeniable and unalterable features of our psychological make-up which explains the possibility of practical reason in the forms of prudence and altruism, and since the unalterable features he identifies are truly undeniable (we do think of

ourselves as beings persisting through time; we do think of ourselves as beings who exist among others who are equally real), he gives us nothing in these "metaphysical conceptions" with which to argue.

We have seen that Korsgaard also sees the relationship between moral awareness and moral motivation as a necessary one. She speaks of the motive or reason for acting morally as being implied by or entailed by the moral judgment. She comes close to viewing the relationship as a logically necessary one when she states: "It is part of the sense of the [moral] judgment that a motive is present."[14] This statement, however, is vague and could be accepted even by an emotivist, which she surely is not. But we need not interpret her as maintaining the view of the connection as a logically necessary one. For Korsgaard, as well as for Kant and Nagel, the necessity of the motivational force of reason must be presupposed in order to make sense out of morality. She refers to the necessity of the connection between moral cognition and moral motivation as the "internalist requirement" on practical reason. The "internalist requirement" must be presupposed in order to make sense out of the common intuition that once someone recognizes a moral reason, it doesn't make sense to ask about any further motive for action. The demand for a

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[14]Korsgaard, "Scepticism about Practical Reason," 9.

justification of morality (the demand for an answer to the question: Why be moral?) is superfluous, at least in the case where a moral obligation is genuinely and authentically recognized. Anyone recognizing a moral obligation in this way knows that the question is superfluous. This is the starting-point of our moral experience that must be explained, and that is explained in Kant's and Nagel's "metaphysical conceptions" of persons.

We may conclude, then, that for Rational Internalism generally, the relationship between moral awareness and moral motivation is necessary, but that the necessity is neither causal, nor logical. Yet it must be presupposed in an account of morality and moral motivation. Since it must be presupposed in order to understand ourselves, let us say that the relationship between moral awareness and moral motivation is existentially necessary.[15] We discover reason's motivating influence through our analysis and interpretation of the experience of practical reason and conduct.

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[15]The term is suggested by Heidegger's "existential analytic" in Being and Time. The "task" of the existential analytic is the uncovering or laying bare of the a priori basis of an understanding of our Being. Heidegger states: "in the existential analytic we also make headway with...the task of laying bare that a priori basis which must be visible before the question of 'what man is' can be discussed philosophically." See Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans., John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), 71.

II

The discussions in the previous chapters have shown that the "generic" definition of ethical internalism (moral belief or judgment entails motivation) is too vague to be meaningful. First of all, there are various ways moral beliefs or judgments can be arrived at, and not all of these ways are attended by motivation. Secondly, the entailment relationship between moral awareness and moral motivation can be logical, causal, or what I have called existential. Finally motivation has been interpreted variously to refer simply to "inclination or desire" or to any impelling force, including reason. Some have taken the view that one is motivated to do something only if one actually does it, and others use the terms more broadly, so that one can be motivated to do something even if one doesn't actually choose to do it, and while experiencing conflicting motivations. No wonder previous versions of internalism have been attacked from so many different directions. Having sorted through the ambiguities and confusions, we are now in a position to present a statement of Rational Internalism as a theory of moral motivation. I will begin with a general statement of Rational Internalism, which will be followed by a series of clarifications which summarize the points established so

far, and which identify the limits of the claims to which Rational Internalism is committed.

Rational Internalism is a theory of moral motivation according to which reason is a motivator for moral action. Reason functions as a motivator in two senses: 1. The genuine and authentic recognition of a moral obligation is in itself a reason or a motive for acting morally. 2. Reason plays a significant role is arriving at the recognition of a moral obligation.

Clarification 1: By saying that reason is a motivator, I mean that the powers of reason can be used to discover that one has a moral obligation, and that once the obligation is recognized, the moral agent has a motive to act morally. As I conceive of Rational Internalism, it is not the view that reason alone, independently of all human disposition or nature, can discover moral obligation; but only that reason can function to awaken a recognition of a moral obligation of which one is not immediately aware in conjunction with natural human dispositions. (Both Hume and Kant are Rational Internalists in this sense.) Rational Internalism, as I see it, can fully accommodate facts of our human nature.

Clarification 2: The Rational Internalist Thesis does not say that having an obligation entails having

motivation, but only that genuinely and authentically recognizing an obligation does so. Naturally, we cannot be motivated by obligations we fail to recognize. The Rational Internalist thesis can also be stated by saying that <u>having a moral reason</u> necessarily entails the motivation to act morally, if it is understood that one <u>has a moral reason</u> only if one <u>genuinely and authentically</u> recognizes it. <u>Having</u> a reason, then, in this sense, is not the same as <u>there being</u> a reason.

<u>Clarification 3</u>: In positing Rational Internalism as the theory that reason can be motivating, I am certainly not denying that other factors such as self-interested desires, emotions, or feelings of sympathy or compassion can also be motivators to, or reasons for, moral action. Indeed, there is obviously a lot of evidence that such other motivating factors exist. Rational Internalism is entirely consistent with the view that sympathy or compassion are valuable as motivators, and that at least one of the marks of virtuous persons is that they are indeed motivated by these factors. I am only claiming that even when these other motivators are absent, reason can be instrumental in bringing about the recognition of moral awareness, and that when it does, that awareness is motivating. So Hume's claim that moral actions are most often motivated by natural feelings of sympathy or

benevolence does not exclude him from being a Rational Internalist.

Clarification 4: Since Rational Internalism includes the view that reason is instrumental in bringing about an awareness of moral obligation, it implies that moral obligation is objective; that is, that it is something that can be discovered, and exists independently of any particular person's consciousness. My theory of Rational Internalism, therefore, does not hold morality "hostage to the vagaries of one's particular conative dispositions."[16]

Clarification 5: Rational Internalism should not be interpreted as the view that moral reasons always lead to the performance of morally right action. It doesn't deny that other motivating factors sometimes or even often "win the day." All that Rational Internalism is committed to is the claim that once a moral reason is authentically and genuinely acknowledged, that ipso facto motivation to act morally is present. Since other motivating factors may or may not be present, Rational Internalism is committed to the claim that once a moral reason is authentically and genuinely acknowledged, then some motivation to act morally is present. In other words, whatever other motivational factors may or not be active, still it is the case that if a moral reason is genuinely and authentically acknowledged,

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[16]This was Frankena's objection to internalism as he understood it (Frankena, 77).

then there is always sufficient motivation to provide a reason for the agent to bring about the action. It would be possible to give an adequate account of a person's moral actions simply in terms of the fact that a moral reason was recognized. The motivation connected to the moral awareness is "all that is required" in order for the moral agent to be able to choose the moral action. The agent may in fact choose to do something other than that which is morally required, but he or she need not have done so. Thus, the Rational Internalist is not committed to the view that moral awareness is a motivation that necessitates action, but only that moral awareness is in itself a sufficient reason for action.

The moral awareness is not always sufficient for action, because there may be other factors which interfere with or block its influence. The other factors have to do with 1) contemporaneous motivational influences relative to passions, desires, emotions, or inclinations which conflict with the influence of moral awareness; 2) contemporaneous psychological states such as grief, panic, depression, distraction, mental or emotional illness; 3) contemporaneous influences of the awareness of other moral obligations to which the moral agent is subject; 4) physical states or conditions such as illness or

constraint; and 5) states of character such as cowardice, weakness, laziness.[17]

The awareness of a moral reason, then, is a prima facie reason to act. Nagel says that to say that the awareness of a moral reason is a prima facie reason to act means that "when one can secure or promote such an end for someone else, and either (a) there are no conflicting reasons, or (b) all other considerations balance out, then one has sufficient reason to act" (PA, 128). The awareness of a moral obligation, then, is one reason among others to act, albeit, one which has a certain priority over others.

When a moral agent recognizes a moral obligation and chooses to neglect it because of some other non-moral motivational influence it is tempting to say that another inclination or desire has "overridden" the motivational influence of the moral obligation. Talk about "overriding desires" is misleading, however, since it suggests that persons will act morally if moral motivation is present unless there exists at the same time within the agent a desire which overpowers the specifically moral motivation, and that the agent could not choose to act morally while under the influence of such a powerful contrary inclination. Extended to the non-moral realm, talk of

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[17]I combine in this list factors that inhibit or block the influence of moral awareness identified by Korsgaard and Nagel (See Chapter 4, Section 1), and I add some suggestions of my own.

overriding desires suggests that whenever the agent has several different motivations the agent will act according to whatever desire is strongest.

In such a view, a motivational determinism is suggested: human beings act according to whatever motivation (moral or non-moral) is strongest. There are two problems with such a theory of motivation. First, it does not cohere with experience, because we think of ourselves as (at least at times) resisting powerful influences. Second, the claim that we always act according to the strongest motivational influence is suspect because the only criterion for the relative strength of a motivational influence is whether or not the moral agent chooses to act on its basis. On this view, even when powerful influences are resisted, the claim is that they are resisted only because of stronger influence. But the only way to determine which is the strongest motivational influence is by looking to see what is done, and then the claim that the person acted according to their strongest desire is trivially true.[18] In short, talk of "overriding desires" is misleading because it neglects the concepts of freedom and responsibility.

Clarification 6: My theory of Rational Internalism does not deny that "Acratic," "Conventional," or

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[18]E. J. Bond, Reason and Value, 25.

"Emotional," or "Intellectual" moral indifference is possible.[19] Acratic Moral Indifference is explained in Clarification 4 above; Conventional, Emotional or Intellectual Indifference are all explained in terms of the fact that where such indifference exists there is no genuine or authentic recognition of a moral obligation. The moral obligation is not experienced by the subject. In Conventional Moral Indifference, the recognition exists that others accept a moral standard, and expect compliance, but that recognition is not motivating because the agent fails to perceive the moral obligation for themselves. Emotional or Intellectual Indifference is explained in light of the constitutional incapacity of the moral agent to experience moral obligations. However, the Rational Internalist does deny that Genuine Moral Indifference is possible. It denies that it is possible for a moral agent to genuinely and authentically perceive a moral obligation and remain unmoved. Ironically, what has been brought to light in the Chapter Five, is that Hume, who appeared to present the most formidable challenge to Rational Internalism, would also deny the possibility of Genuine Moral Indifference. For him, any moral judgment is formed on the basis of moral approval, and sometimes, even if rarely, the moral approval itself is the motivating factor.

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[19]I have made these distinctions between kinds of moral indifference in Chapter 4, 118-124.

A person who lacked a sense of moral approval in Hume's mind is constitutionally or emotionally deficient. And lacking in the moral sentiments of moral approval or disapproval, the deficient person would be incapable of making a moral judgment, since doing so is based on such a capacity. So for Hume also the recognition of a moral obligation also necessarily entails moral motivation.

Clarification 7: The necessity which connects the recognition through reason that something is a moral obligation and moral motivation is neither logical, nor causal, as shown in the first section of this chapter. I characterize the necessity as an existential one. This means that the motivating character of reason is presupposed in the very experience of the force of moral obligation.

Clarification 8: Since my interpretation of Rational Internalism claims that reason motivates only in light of the genuine and authentic recognition of moral obligation, and since I have allowed for the presence of other morally motivating influences and for the fact of inhibiting motivational influences, there is plenty of room for discussions of the role of virtue in moral motivation. In his evaluation of the current literature on Internalism, Wren suggests that "moral philosophers need to go beyond their usual portrayal of the "built-into" relationship as one of logical entailment" (Wren, 77), and hints that moral

psychologists are on the right track in explaining moral motivation in "aretaic" terms. My version of Rational Internalism is completely open to the suggestion that moral philosophers follow the lead of moral psychologists in this way.[20] Genuine and authentic recognition of moral obligation presupposes some degree of virtue, and the more virtuous a person is, the more capable they are of making such moral judgments, and the more often they are likely to make them. Thus, the ramification of my theory of Rational Internalism is that the importance of moral education must be stressed, a view, of course, held by all major moral theorists, and indeed, by anyone who has thought seriously about morality.

Having made these clarifications, we can now see how this version of internalism can function as a means by which to categorize ethical theories of moral motivation. If internalism is understood as Rational Internalism, the view that reason is a moral motivator (that once a moral obligation is perceived through, or by the aid of, reason, motivation is necessarily experienced), then externalism is the view that reason is not a moral motivator. The cloud of confusion surrounding the classification of traditional moral philosophers as internalists or externalists identified in the Introduction dissipates significantly

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[20]Wren, 77.

with the clarifications of Rational Internalism as a theory of moral motivation.

Thus, Kant is clearly a Rational Internalist, but once we see that the differences between Kant and Hume are not as great as they appear, and once we see that for Hume, too, reason plays an essential role in identifying moral situations and obligations, we see that Hume is a Rational Internalist after all. While Frankena does not explain why he thought of Plato as an internalist and Aristotle as an externalist, we can see that they both are Rational Internalists. The motivating power of reason is reflected in Plato's image of tri-partite soul, and in Aristotle's notion of practical reason.

In Chapter Three I argued that Mill was an internalist according to Nagel's definition of internalism as the view that moral motivation is tied to the recognition of moral obligations, despite the fact that Nagel thought of him as an externalist. Mill is certainly a Rational Internalist in the sense that he believes that the genuine and authentic recognition of a moral obligation does motivate one to act morally, and also in the sense the he believes that reason plays a significant role in determining which actions contribute to the "general happiness." The fact that he talks about sympathy as a sanction for morality does nothing to exclude him from the class of Rational

Internalists, just as Hume's talk of sympathy and benevolence does not.

Emotivism must be excluded from Rational Internalism, as I have formulated it. Emotivism denies that there are moral truths which can be discovered by reason, and holds that moral judgments are simply expressions of already existing attitudes or feelings of the moral agent; attitudes and feelings which are not subject to rational evaluation, since emotivists believe that moral beliefs are neither true nor false.

Social psychologists and social learning theorists who believe that all moral motivation derives only from conditioning through reward and punishment, are clearly excluded from the class of Rational Internalists.[21] For them, reason does not play a significant role in determining or apprehending morality; rather, morality is simply a matter of social custom. Moral motivation is always a contingent matter, since there is no such thing as a genuine and authentic recognition of moral obligation. We cannot speak of persons <u>having moral reasons</u> (in the genuine and authentic sense); we can only speak of <u>there being reasons</u> to act morally.

If ethical intuitionism is the view, as Korsgaard has suggested, that the recognition of moral obligation

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[21]See Wren's article for examples of social learning theorists, 72 - 73.

motivates only by "triggering" a desire to do what is right, and that it is possible to genuinely and authentically recognize a moral obligation and yet not be motivated by it, then intuitionism would not be a Rational Internalist view.[22] If, on the other hand, intuitionism does not hold that it is possible to fail to be motivated by the awareness of a moral obligation (in the genuine and authentic sense), and if the "desire to do what is right" is nothing other than the human disposition to approve of what is good, so that recognizing a moral obligation necessarily motivates, then it would be an example of Rational Internalism.

In conclusion, the theory of moral motivation that I have advanced, and which I have called Rational Internalism, is a theory which does provide a convincing and acceptable account of moral motivation. It is a theory which is consistent with intuitive beliefs about the motivating influence of morality. It is the theory of moral motivation one can see incompletely developed in the works of Falk, Kant and Nagel. Criticisms and questions about internalist theories have offered the opportunity to develop the theory more precisely, because confronting the criticisms has forced us to get clear on the relation between moral cognition and moral motivation which is

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[22]Korsgaard, "Scepticism about Practical Reason," 9.

presupposed in our common intuitions about morality's influence. In sorting through these criticisms, then, we have lifted the layers of confusion and arrived at the core of the truth about human beings and moral motivation. In this way, we have offered a version of internalism which is both philosophically helpful and interesting.

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APPROVAL SHEETS

This dissertation submitted by Sharon Elizabeth Sytsma has been read and approved by the following committee:

David Ozar, Director
Associate Professor, Philosophy
Loyola University of Chicago

Mark Waymack
Assistant Professor, Philosophy
Loyola University of Chicago

Thomas Wren
Professor, Philosophy
Loyola University of Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of this dissertation and the signature which appears below verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

This dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

July 2, 1990
date

director